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# BELGRAVIA

AN

Illustrated London Magazine

Vol. XXIX.

MARCH TO JUNE 1876



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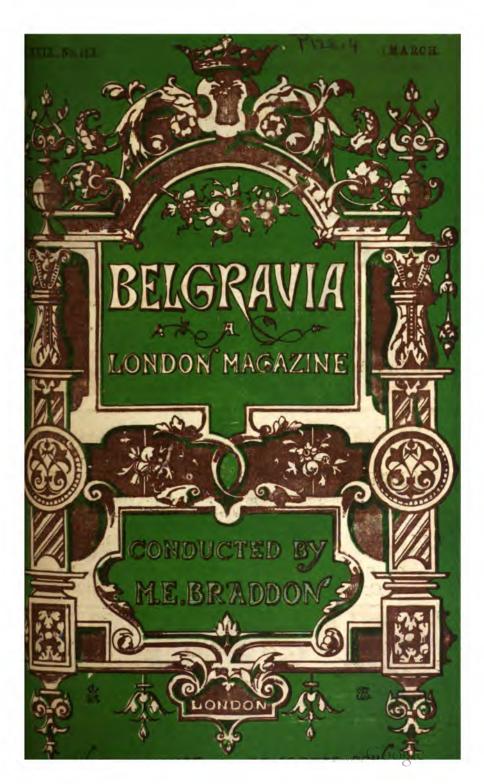
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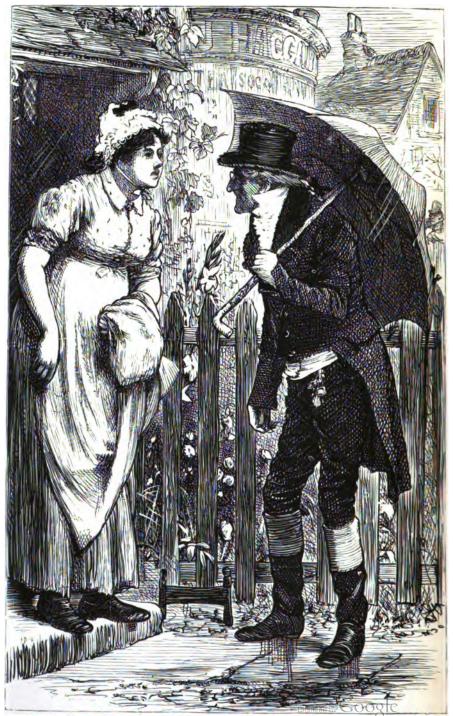
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## BELGRAVIA

MARCH 1876

## JOSHUA HAGGARD'S DAUGHTER

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER VIII. THE SQUIRE MAKES A BARGAIN.

NOTHER year had gone in gentle tranquillity—a year marked by no shadow of trouble, doubt, or dissension in Joshua Haggard's household. Oswald had been true to his promise, and had held religiously to his prescribed position as a friend of the The simple uneventful life had glided on in its allotted course: the tea-drinkings in the parlour; aunt Judith's lectures on the economics and duties of existence; dawdling evenings in the wilderness, in which nothing progressed but the gray-worsted stocking on Naomi's shining needles, which, being only taken off to give place to another stocking of exactly the same shape and colour, seemed to Oswald a fair type of eternity; the Scripture-reading and exhortation at eventide; the homely suppers and friendly partings with Naomi and her father at the little wooden gate,-placid monotonous joys, which had not yet begun to pall upon Oswald Pentreath. If there had been any hollowness in Joshua's life, any shams to be discovered in his household, familiarity would have vulgarised this quiet home circle; but all here was good and true. Even aunt Judith, though far from pleasant, was at this stage of her existence transparent as the daylight. There were no skeletons in cupboards for the stranger to stumble upon unawares, no domestic dustholes to reveal themselves to the disgusted explorer.

Very quiet and peaceful and passionless was this courtship which was no courtship, and yet meant as much to the two actors in the little comedy as if they had been lovers of the most romantic type, and had never opened their mouths save to pour forth a torrent of sentimentality. No cloistered nun was ever truer to her vow than Naomi to the promise she had made her father that there should be no talk of love or marriage between her and Oswald during this time of probation; and Oswald, although given to occasional little

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gusts of rebellion, was fain to submit and to accept his position

with a good grace.

'I am like a shopboy in your father's employment,' he said.
'If I behave pretty well during my apprenticeship, and keep my fingers off the sugar and figs, and refrain from extracting odd sixpences out of the till, I am to be taken as a partner when I am out of my time. I am on trial: isn't that it, Naomi?'

'It is your future happiness that is on trial, Oswald. If you

can be constant to friendship you will be constant to—'

'Hush!' cried the young man, putting his hand upon her lips. 'The forbidden word was nearly out.'

Naomi blushed and hastened the flight of her knitting-needles,

while Oswald laughed heartily at his small joke.

They were innocently happy together in these fair summer days, like children in ignorance of all the world outside the narrow circle of their individual lives, with not one thought or desire hidden from each other, and finding it as natural to be together, to think together, to hope together, and to dream together, as if they had been a new Ferdinand and Miranda, and this quiet nook, Combhollow, an enchanted island.

With Jim for their companion they wandered in the Squire's wood and park, and Herne had easy dreamy days in his loose-box, where he stood with his head hanging down as if he had done with the world and had not strength left in him for another mile; while Oswald taught Naomi how to use her pencil in copying lopsided old elms with yawning chasms in their trunks, or a little bit of rugged bank clothed with ferns and bright with foxgloves. Her intense love of nature made art easy to her.

It is not to be supposed that the life of Mr. Haggard's daughter was given over altogether to a blissful idleness such as this—to dreamy afternoons in the wood, to the cultivation of Nature's wildlings in her wilderness, and to primitive efforts with a lead pencil. She was up at five on these summer mornings, and helped Sally in the performance of her house-cleaning till breakfast-time. Naomi who arranged the parlours and polished the old mahogany tables and bureaus, and brightened all the brasswork, and kept every bit of old Chelsea or Battersea ware free from dust and stain. That tall straight figure of hers was none the worse for assiduous table-rubbing, which widened her chest and gave lissomness to her limbs; and her clear pale complexion was all the better for early hours and an active life. The flower-pots were in Naomi's care, and a withered leaf on fuchsia or geranium-fuchsias were new in those days and esteemed highly by floriculturists-would have been a kind of disgrace. She starched and ironed all the muslin curtains, and aunt Judith's idea of gentility demanded a great deal of decorative drapery in starched muslin.

The house-linen was also in Naomi's charge, and many a modern housekeeper who gives thirty or forty guineas for a dinner-dress might blush on comparing her linen-closet with that roomy kvender-scented repository at the head of the staircase where Naomi kept her glistening table-cloths and Irish-linen sheets and pillow-cases, all neatly marked by her own hands and laid in orderly piles along the broad oak shelves. Naomi had the care of her father's and brother's wardrobes, and kept everything in neat repair, taking as much pains with a difficult job of darning as a young lady of the present day would devote to an elaborate achievement in point Turque or point de Venise. Naomi made her own dresses, which were not uselessly numerous, and occasionally confectioned some decorative article for aunt Judith, who required to be propitiated with an industrious effort of that kind now and then.

It will be seen, therefore, that when Mr. Haggard's daughter enjoyed the sweets of Arcadian leisure she had fairly earned the pivilege of idleness. No unhemmed duster cried out against her, no buttonless shirt lurking in drawer or wardrobe bore witness to her neglect. Life smiled at her with its serenest smile, and no accusing twinge of conscience reminded her of a forgotten duty.

Whether the Squire had known of his son's attachment to the dissenter's daughter from the time when Oswald's visits to the Haggards became frequent, or whether the fact revealed itself to him suddenly this summer through the gossip of Combhollow, would be difficult to decide. The Squire was a gentleman who could be as blind as a mole when it pleased him, or as sharp-sighted as a ferret if sharp-sightedness suited his purpose. On this occasion he played the mole and pretended to know nothing, until one midsummer day, when he pounced upon his son at dinner-time with a sudden charge.

'So, sir, you have been deceiving me,' he exclaimed; 'you have taken advantage of the liberty I give you to form low acquaintance.'

'What do you mean by low acquaintance?' asked Oswald, turning pale. 'I associate with none who can be called by that name.'

'What, sir! are you not hail-fellow-well-met with that grocer Haggard?'

'I thought you professed republican sentiments, sir, and despised the petty differences of social rank.'

'So I do, when a duke undersells me by letting his land at so low a rate that mine will hardly bring me three per cent; but I don't want my son and heir to keep company with counter-jumpers. Trade is an honourable calling, I'm republican enough to admit that; but this friend of yours is a Jack-of-all-trades, and deals in fire and brimstone on Sundays. I might forgive him for being a greer, but I can't forgive him for being a canting hypocritical knave.'

'Why should you call him that? You don't know him; and you, who have no religion at all, cannot be prejudiced against him because he is a dissenter.'

'I call him canter and hypocrite because he trades on his piety, and sells his tea and sugar and candles faster than any other tradesman on the strength of his Sunday ranting.'

Oswald kept his temper with an effort. Abuse of Joshua Haggard was more than a man who loved Naomi could meekly bear.

'I happen to know Mr. Haggard thoroughly,' he said, 'and I know that he is honest as a trader and earnest as a preacher—that piety with him is no sham put on to serve a purpose—that in the old days, when persecution was the reward of faith, he would have testified to his belief at the stake. Yes, sir, this homely village

shopkeeper is of the stuff that martyrs are made of.'

'I wish there were any probability of the wear and tear of this stuff being roughly tested,' retorted the Squire. 'These dissenters are very fond of howling about fire and brimstone in a remote and shadowy future. I should like to see them brought face to face with a pile of blazing fagots in the present. However, this is wide of the purpose, young gentleman. I want to know what you mean by courting this Methodist's daughter.'

'What courtship generally means, sir—the prelude to marriage.'
'What, you, Oswald Pentreath, seriously intend to marry a

grocer's daughter?'

'Certainly, my dear father, if she will have me. I think you should be flattered that your son shows himself so apt a disciple of

your gospel of liberty.'

The Squire, who had lived through that all-uprooting whirlwind in history, the French Revolution, had often preached second-hand Marat and Danton to his son, to say nothing of second-hand Wilkes. But he was not prepared to have his opinions cast back in his teeth after this practical fashion.

'Then you mean to marry this girl?' he said.

'I do, sir. I shall be sorry if my marriage offends you, but as it is a matter which involves the happiness of my life you must not be angry if I choose for myself.'

'A pretty choice for a gentleman's son!' exclaimed the Squire.

'Supposing it were a bad choice, which I deny, what opportunities have I had for making a better? You have chosen to live your own life—you have shut yourself up in this house and isolated yourself from your fellow-men. You have kept me so complete a pauper, that I could not venture to make a friend in my own station lest I should be put to open shame some day on account of my empty pockets. I have accepted the life patiently enough. I have assumed a pride that I never felt, to save myself from humiliation. I have fenced myself round with a dogged reserve, to escape

the degradation of being patronised by men who are my inferiors in all but purse.'

'How much money can this parson of yours give his daughter?' asked the Squire, suddenly changing his note.

'That is a question I have never thought of asking.'

'Humph!' muttered the aggravated father. 'You ought to have been a prince in a fairy tale. You've about as much sense as that young man who picked up the glass slipper, and offered to marry the first woman who could get her foot into it. Now hark ye, sir, if Joshua Haggard can give his daughter five thousand pounds on her wedding-day-no settlements or rubbish of that sort, mind you—you can marry her without let or hindrance from me, and you can bring her home here. One young woman won't make much difference in the housekeeping, I suppose, for the first year or so.'

'I don't know about the five thousand pounds,' replied Oswald, 'but I thank you for the friendliness of your offer. I believe Mr. Haggard has saved money; but I should not like him to think I

had any expectation of gain in proposing for his daughter.'

He told his father of his promise to Joshua, and under what conditions he was received in the minister's household.

'I have another year to serve before my apprenticeship is finished,' he said. 'I shall give you proper notice of my marriage, you may be assured.'

'That's dutiful; but be sure you don't marry without a dowry. A few thousand pounds spent on improvements as the leases run out would raise our rents five-and-twenty per cent. As far as my own inclination goes, I'd as leave you married the grocer's daughter as the finest lady in the land, or leaver. I want no fine lady here to waste and squander, to find fault with the old-fashioned furniture, and quarrel with the old servants, and spend a fortune on newfangled flowers with Latin names, as some do.'

Oswald was deeply grateful for thus much favour; and father and son spent the rest of the evening in the friendliest manner, the old Squire prosing about his estate, the rents he got as against the rents he ought to get, leases that were nearly run out, and leases that had a long time to run; but not by one word did he hint at money saved and invested.

'I sometimes wonder what becomes of your rental, father,' said Oswald. 'We seem to spend so little, and yet you never have any

money.'

'Ah,' groaned the Squire, 'I was a fool in my time; I've had to pay for my folly. And you don't suppose that a house like this is kept up for nothing—servants to pay, two horses in the stable; and we all eat and drink, remember.'

'I should have thought four hundred a year would pay for every-Digitized by Google

thing.'

'Should you?' cried the Squire ironically. 'You know no more of figures than a baby. Wait till I'm under the sod, and see how far four hundred a year will go in a barrack of a house like this.'

'But the empty rooms don't eat and drink, father, if we do.'

'I can't argue with a fool,' cried the Squire testily.

Oswald was very glad to have got over the revelation of his engagement to Naomi so easily. That condition about a dowry was something of a stumbling-block; but he felt assured that Joshua did not mean his daughter to be portionless, and there was plenty of time for all business-like discussion. He felt happier in his wooing after that talk with his father—more at ease with Naomi, better satisfied with himself.

The Squire was a practical man, and having made up his mind upon a subject, was not slow in putting his ideas into action. Three days after having come to an understanding with his son, the old man presented himself at Joshua Haggard's front-door in the drowsy afternoon. Sally, the maid-of-all-work, started back as if she had seen a vision on opening the door to that formidable visitor. She had just sense enough to usher Mr. Pentreath into the best parlour, and just strength enough to totter to the opposite room, where Naomi sat at her plain sewing. There was a drizzling rain falling from the dull gray sky, and no possibility of Arcadian rambles on this particular afternoon. Jim was in the shop, being inducted into the mysteries of stock-taking.

'It's the Squire,' gasped Sally, 'and he wants to see your father.'

Naomi grew pale at the announcement. Oswald had told her nothing about that talk with his father, the Squire's condition about the dowry being a hindrance to any such confidence. Naomi thought that the Squire had come to remonstrate. This happy year that was nearly ended was to be the beginning and end of her delight. Some crushing stroke was about to fall, annihilating love and happiness. No one had a good word for the Squire, and she could only think of him as a tyrant and an enemy.

She opened the door of communication with the shop.

'You are wanted, father. Mr. Pentreath has called to see you,' she said faintly.

'Tell him I shall come in to tea.'

'It's not Oswald, father; it's old Mr. Pentreath.'

'What, the Squire! then I must come at once. You'd better do no more till I come back, Jim; you'll only get things in a muddle.'

And Jim, nothing loth to be released from his labours, shut the big account-book with a slam, jumped off his high stool, and came whistling out of the counting-house, a little railed-in pen at the end of the shop.

'I'll wash my hands and come to the Squire directly, Naomi,' said Joshua; and then, seeing the girl's pale face, he stopped to pat her gently on the shoulder. 'Don't be frightened, my dear; the Squire can do us no harm. We have been honest and straightforward throughout.'

'I feel as if he had come to end my dream, father.'

'Life is something more than a dream, Naomi; and a good woman's happiness is not to be blown away by the breath of a bad man.'

He went out to the back premises to wash his hands; and then, in no wise discomposed by his visitor's importance, made his appearance in the parlour, where the Squire was peering at the fly-leaf of the family Bible, on which Joshua's marriage and the birth of his two children were recorded. Mr. Pentreath, who knew the names and histories of his neighbours for forty miles round Combhollow, was pleased to see that Naomi's mother had been a Penrose—a name which implied the probability of a dowry, the Penroses being wealthy farmers on the other side of Rockmouth.

He greeted the minister with unusual affability.

'I hope I didn't disturb you in your business occupations, Mr. Haggard,' he began graciously. 'I have wished to call upon you for ever so long; but I am a busy man myself, as I daresay you know—my own steward and bailiff; pay all my accounts with my own hands, and see to every detail—the only way to make a moderate estate thrive. Pray be seated, my dear sir; I want a friendly talk with you,' concluded the Squire, ensconcing himself in the large chintz-covered arm-chair, chintz daintily clean and smelling of lavender.

Joshua drew out one of the ponderous horsehair-seated chairs

from the wall, and seated himself opposite his guest.

'Now I suppose, Mr. Haggard, though you and I have never met on friendly terms before, we know as much about each other as if we had been living under the same roof for the last ten years. Nobody has any secrets in a place like Combhollow. You know that I was what is called wild in my youth; that I spent a good deal of money—very wild that—and mortgaged my estate in order to drink and gamble with a pack of ruffians whom I thought wits and fine gentlemen then, and whom I regard with ineffable contempt now. The only thing that has remained to me from those days is a certain liberality of opinion, which places me above the level of these country bumpkins you and I have the misfortune to live amongst.'

'I count it no misfortune to live where I do, Mr. Pentreath. I have an honest liking for most of my neighbours, a warm affection

for some of them.'

'Ah, you are Christian-like by profession,' sneered the Squire.

'I suppose the animal creation in Combhollow is as good as any other cattle of the same breed; but when one has lived with men who think for themselves, and interchange ideas of some sort—no matter how spurious or how shallow—when they talk, these sons of the soil are but poor company. However, as I was saying, my friends of 'ninety-five robbed me of my money, and gave me nothing but their freedom of thought in exchange. The school I graduated in held that a shopkeeper was as good as a landowner any day.'

'The school I belong to holds that all men are equal in the presence of their Creator,' replied Joshua quietly; 'but we are not the less ready to respect distinctions of class upon earth, and to

honour our superiors.'

'Yet you allowed my son to come courting your daughter.'

- 'Under such restrictions as would enable him and me to be very sure that he was in earnest before I suffered him to marry her.'
- 'Upon my word, sir, you carry things with a high hand. And it never occurred to you to consult my feelings in respect to this alliance?'
  - 'I considered your son old enough to make his own election.'
- 'Perhaps you did not know that I could disinherit him if he offended me?'
- 'Yes, Mr. Pentreath. I knew your estate to be unentailed, and your power to dispose of your property unlimited; but as I value your son for what he is himself, rather than for any possibility of inheritance, this consideration had no influence upon me.'

'You mean to tell me that you would marry your daughter to

a penniless gentleman?'

'I mean to tell you that I would marry her to an honest man who honestly loved her, and trust to Providence for finding him an occupation and a livelihood.'

'You would make him turn preacher, perhaps?'

- 'Not unless he had the gift and vocation for such a calling. I would rather tie a linen apron round his waist and teach him to sell tea and sugar.'
- 'A Pentreath turned village grocer!' cried the Squire; 'that would be pushing freedom of opinion to its utmost. Well, Mr. Haggard, I admire your independence, and I am not going to interfere with my son's courtship of your daughter. He shall marry her if he likes and you like, and he shall have Pentreath Grange and all that belongs thereto in due time. There may be some of my neighbours who will call me a fool for this indulgence of a young man's fancy; but as my neighbours and I have never been on very friendly terms, I can afford to let them say hard things of me behind my back. Oswald may marry that handsome daughter of yours and bring her home to the Grange as soon as he pleases. And now,

Mr. Haggard, having settled the main question we can proceed to details. How much money—you're a warm man, I know, my good friend—how much, now, do you mean to give this only daughter?'

'That is a question I have never asked myself.'

'Perhaps not; but it is a question you must have expected somebody else to ask you sooner or later. My son has no more idea of life's realities than a bread-and-butter miss at boarding-school. He would never ask you such a question. It's my duty as a man of the world to think for him in this matter. You must have saved a good bit of money, Mr. Haggard. Your father had the business before you; and while you were roaming about the hills preaching to the miners and suchlike, he was selling tea at twelve shillings a pound. He left you something comfortable, I know, and your wife brought you a tidy little bit of money—didn't she, now?'

'My wife did not come to me empty-handed.'

'Of course not; a sensible man like you would not marry a pretty face with an empty pocket. Now, to be perfectly frank with you, I am anxious that my son should be in a position to improve his estate. There's a great deal might be done for a few thousands—building larger barns, draining the low-lying meadows, and so forth. The money would not be squandered, my good friend. Your grandchildren would profit by any sacrifice you might make.'

'Good,' said Joshua Haggard thoughtfully. 'I think that, upon those conditions, I might give Naomi three thousand pounds for her

portion.'

'Not half enough for those necessary improvements. If you could say six thousand, now—'

'Impossible. I have a son to think about.'

'Your son will succeed to your business.'

'For which he must have sufficient capital. We are wholesale dealers in a small way, remember, Mr. Pentreath, and supply a good many village shopkeepers.'

Of course. What a splendid business yours must be! You can

give your daughter six thousand pounds without feeling it.'

'I could not give her so much without injustice to my boy, and nothing could tempt me to that.'

'Pshaw! your business will have doubled itself before your son

inherits it. Do you want to make him a millionaire?'

'I want to act fairly between him and his sister. The utmost I could give Naomi, either on her marriage or at my death, would be four or five thousand pounds.'

'Say five and consider it settled,' cried the Squire eagerly.

'And I should expect you to settle land of the same value on my daughter, the rent of the same to be paid to her separate use and maintenance during her life, and the property to descend to her children, with reversion to her husband if she dies childless.'

The Squire's countenance fell, and his small eyes sparkled angrily.

'Why, this is taking a mortgage on my land!' he exclaimed.

'No, Mr. Pentreath; it is only taking care of my daughter. She is incapable of spending such an income on herself, and her receipt of the money would be doubtless a mere form; but I want to feel that I have given my five thousand pounds to her positively, and not to her husband or her father-in-law. Should she be widowed early, the estate so settled would serve to keep her. Should you take it into your head to disinherit your son, the income from his wife's settlement would keep him out of the workhouse.'

'You are a man of business, Mr. Haggard,' exclaimed the

Squire, divided between disappointment and admiration.

'I should be sorry to be in business if I were not. There is Mallowfield Farm, now; I have heard that valued at five thousand pounds. Settle Mallowfield on my daughter, and Oswald shall have the five thousand on his wedding-day, which is as much as to say you shall have the money to spend on barns or drainage.'

'Mallowfield!' gasped the Squire, 'the most compact bit of pro-

perty on the estate!'

'I can keep my five thousand pounds and my daughter, Mr. Pentreath.'

'There isn't better land in the county than those low-lying pastures. Well, I'll turn it over in my mind, friend Haggard. If you would say six thousand, now—'

'I never say more than I mean.'

'Come now, I came here prepared to be liberal. Your daughter shall have Mallowfield. How canny of you to pitch upon the best of my farms! And look ye, Mr. Haggard, we'll have the settlements drawn up next week, and you and I will dance at our children's wedding before harvest-home.'

'No, Mr. Pentreath; I told your son he must wait two years for my daughter. He has another year to wait before he calls her

wife.'

'Pshaw! you are as bad as that old gentleman in the Bible who served his son-in-law such a shabby trick. Why shouldn't these young people be married out of hand?'

'I don't believe in hasty marriages, sir. My wife and I had

been promised to each other three years before we were married.'

'But here, where there is no impediment—'

'There is difference of rank. I want to feel very sure that your son is in earnest—that there is no possibility of after-regrets. He has stood firm for a year, and I believe he loves my daughter. Let him be constant to that attachment for one year more, and I shall be content to trust him with her future. She is very precious to me. I cannot let her go lightly.'

'Egad, I daresay it's the five thousand he won't let go,' thought the Squire.

He ceded the point with a tolerable grace, eager as he had been to get the grocer's money into his clutches. After all, it might be well to have time to weigh the matter quietly—to see if there were no better match possible for Oswald, no more money to be made in the open market of matrimony. He was in bad odour among the county people, and had held himself aloof from them churlishly, not taking the trouble to assoilzie himself and get rid of that evil taint left by the past, as he might have done by a little deference to popular prejudices. His unpopularity had reflected itself upon Oswald, and the young man had grown up without a companion or a friend, and quite outside that charmed circle in which rich young spinsters revolve. Still it might not be too late.

'There are places where young fellows pick up heiresses,' mused the Squire: 'Tunbridge Wells, or Bath, or Cheltenham, or Brighton—places where a good-looking young man with a good old name and a patrimonial estate might marry a fortune for the asking. But my son has no brains. An adventurer without a sixpence would outmanœuvre him anywhere.'

And then the Squire, composing his features into a satyr-like grin, which was meant for a smile, asked to be presented to his future daughter-in-law; whereupon Joshua opened the parlour-door and called Naomi, who came from the opposite room, pale and trembling a little, as if about to make the acquaintance of an ogre.

The shrivelled old Squire, with his large head and shrunken body, was not altogether unlike the popular idea of the ogre family. His gray hair straggled in sparse locks over his narrow brow, and he wore a pigtail on his high collar of bottle-green velvet—velvet which long and constant wear had made sleeker and more shiny than velvet ought to be. Indeed, the pigtail, for the most part in motion like a pendulum, made its impression upon the velvet.

At his waist the Squire wore a large bunch of keys and seals, which he was wont to rattle as he talked. His large gold watch was known to be the exactest timekeeper in Combhollow; and often when the whole town had lapsed ignominiously to the rear of Greenwich time, Mr. Pentreath's bell might be heard ringing up his household in the bleak wintry morning with a rigid exactitude to the very moment marked on the dial at the National Observatory.

Very like an ogre looked the Squire as he drew Naomi's head downward to his withered old lips, and honoured her with the least agreeable kiss she had ever had in her life.

'God bless your handsome face!' said the old man graciously.
'From this time forward you must think of me as your father.'

'I never can have but one father, sir,' answered Naomi gravely; 'but I shall always honour and love you, for your son's sake.'

'And you'll come and live at the Grange very soon, my dear, I hope, and keep those idle servants of mine in order'—this of the hardest-working household in Combhollow—'and look to the dairy. I never have a morsel of butter worth eating. This obstinate father of yours talks about Oswald waiting another year, but I see no reason why you should not be married in a month.'

'Father always knows best,' said Naomi.

'What a demure puss it is! If your father were going to be married himself he'd be in a greater hurry, child. I'm an old man, and may not live to see next summer, and I should like to dance at my son's wedding. That is to say, I should like to see him comfortably married,' said the Squire, correcting himself; 'for as to wedding dances, or any such tomfoolery, I never held with them. Life's much too serious a matter for its most solemn changes to be ushered in by squeaking fiddles and lively jigs.'

Having settled a business matter to his satisfaction, and having, as he believed, made himself eminently agreeable, Squire Pentreath took his leave, escorted to the little green garden-gate by Joshua, and contemplated from the other side of the open street by the land-

lord of the First and Last.

'Everything is settled, my dear,' said Joshua, bending down to kiss his daughter. 'My sweet girl will be a lady—mistress of Pentreath Grange, and with manifold opportunities of doing good in her generation. But I hope she will never forget that before all and above all she is a Christian, and that earthly blessings are but charges and responsibilities in the sight of God.'

'I should be something less than your daughter if I forgot that,

my dear father,' answered Naomi tenderly.

Never had she loved her father so dearly as in this moment, when the floodtide of happiness rushed in upon her soul with over-whelming force.

- 'Your lover has been true to you for a year, Naomi, and constant under restrictions that some would think hard; let him but prove steadfast for one year more, and I can give you to him without a shadow of doubt.'
- 'He will be steadfast, father,' answered the girl firmly, replying out of the fulness of her own faith, which she knew to be incapable of change or wavering.

### CHAPTER IX.

### 'LOVE IN ONE HAND HIS BOW DID TAKE.'

It was summer-time still, the tangled hedges fragrant with honeysuckle and the fields purple with clover, when Joshua Haggard entered the little village of Penmoyle again, after a year's absence, on foot and alone. He had been to the extremity of the peninsula to see Nicholas

Wild, and to exult in the progress of that young man's ministrations and the growth of his influence; and now, upon his homeward way, he turned aside from the straight road to Truro, to take his rest in the fat pastures of Penmoyle.

He had arranged things better this time than on the last occasion, and had planned his holiday so as to spend a Sunday at Penmovle and to preach to the little flock there. As on his former visit, it was a Saturday afternoon when he entered the village, and about the same hour. How peaceful, how unalterable everything looked, a beautiful placidity pervading all the scene—a quiet profound as that almost awful stillness of smooth mountain lakes locked in a circle of silent hills. And yet death found out Penmoyle now and then; and people's joints were wracked with rheumatism; and fever, like a furious Malay, ran a-muck among the simple villagers; and bad sons grew up to be the torment of neglectful fathers; and village innocence went astray; and all the evils that rend society at large were repeated in little in this narrow world of Penmoyle. But, smiling under a cloudless sky at the close of June, one might think the place a little bit of heaven that had broken off and fallen upon earth. Round it far and wide lay the wild hills of earth, pierced here and there with the shafts of deserted mines; but this green oasis must be a fragment of Paradise.

Joshua contemplated the place with a curious delight. It was not half so picturesque as Combhollow, but its inland beauty, its fertile frame of meadow and flowering hedgerow, moved him to deepest admiration.

'How pretty the village is!' he said to himself. 'I never used to think it so beautiful.'

There was the little chestnut-grove, where the street widened into a village-green, just opposite the homely old inn. And there, at the corner of the green, stood the Miss Weblings' neat abode, the brazen knocker shining, the brazen birdcage gleaming in the afternoon sun, all the windows shut—it being a principle with the spin-sters to exclude dust at some sacrifice of fresh air—the muslin curtains drawn back in neat loops, the flower-pots as red as of old.

But there was something that distracted Joshua's eye from flower-pots and bird-cages, and that was a girlish figure standing by the gate, a girlish face looking dreamily down the empty village street.

It was Cynthia, indulging in a few minutes' idle contemplation of the external world after her day's work was done and that afternoon toilet which was known throughout Penmoyle as cleaning oneself had been carefully performed. There was not much to look at, certainly, in the High-street of Penmoyle, not much excuse for dawdling or frivolous curiosity, but still Cynthia looked. There was a lumbering old wain loaded high with fragrant hay standing in front of the inn, while its custodian drank deep of a stinging cider in the bar; there were the innkeeper's poultry picking up a free living in the highway; there was the landlady's pet jackdaw discoursing hoarsely to the empty air from his wicker cage in front of the parlour-window with its scarlet curtain, which looked so cheerful on dark winter nights; there were the children playing Tommy Touchwood under the chestnuts, and making as much noise as if a second Herod had just issued his edict for the extermination of another fourteen thousand innocents. And here came the tall figure of Joshua, in his black coat and breeches, and well-fitting gray stockings, and neat buckled shoes, walking slowly up the street.

Cynthia gave a start at sight of him, and flung the gate open and ran to meet him, blushing, impetuous, her blue eyes full of joy.

'I knew that you would come,' she said.

Had she grown lovelier in the year that was gone, or had she always been thus supremely lovely? Joshua asked himself wonderingly. It seemed to him that he had never beheld anything so beautiful as that innocent face lifted up to him in tenderest regard, those frank eyes, that rosy smiling mouth, a complexion as of blushroses—the old half-forgotten blush-roses that grew in the gardens of long ago, ivory-white petals deepening to a soft carnation at the heart of the flower.

'I knew you would come,' repeated Cynthia. 'Miss Priscilla said you would write first to say that you were coming; but I thought you would come just like this, when no one expected you, walking quietly up the street some Saturday afternoon. I thought it would be on a Saturday; and I have watched for you every Saturday since the roses began to flower. You said you would come in the summer. Are you going back to Truro for the night coach?'

'No, Cynthia; I am going to stay till Monday, if my friends will have me.'

'How glad I am!' she cried, clasping her hands. 'And you will read to us again in the best parlour?'

'Yes, Cynthia. I hope you have been good.'

'I have learned to read the Bible.'

- 'That's good news. And have you been industrious and obedient?'
- 'I don't quite know; but I think the ladies are pleased with me. Miss Priscilla has given me her flowery gown, and Miss Webling has given me a buckle; and they let me sit with them of evenings when there's no company.'

'Then I think you must have been good. Worthy people like the Miss Weblings would treat you according to your deserts.'

'They have been very kind, and I am very happy.'

'And you have never wished yourself back among those show-folks?'



'Never, never. I was fond of the pony; but he was the only person I really cared for. If I were quite sure nobody would illuse him I should never give a thought to my old life; but I do think about him sometimes, poor fellow.'

'You have never heard or seen anything of your people?'

'I have never seen them. Some of the school-children saw them last September on the Truro road—I know it was them by the pony—but they never came nearer than that. I have dreamed about them many a time, and woke crying, thinking I was with them again.'

'You shall never be with them again, Cynthia. Why, if they were to come this way now they would hardly know you, you have

grown so-sedate-looking.'

She was neatly clad in one of those lavender prints he had selected. She wore a muslin handkerchief across her shoulders, a muslin cap on her fair soft hair, which was simply dressed after her own fashion, in which she had reproduced unawares the style of a Greek statue. Her round white arms were bare, the hands reddened a little with labour, but neither large nor ill-shaped.

'I shall hear what your mistresses have to say of you,' said Joshua, as he moved towards the doll's-house door; 'and if they give a good account of your conduct I shall be better pleased than I can say.'

He had little fear of their report. Such innocent gladness as made radiant Cynthia's face never went along with evil-doing. The girl ushered him into the best parlour, and then ran up-stairs to rouse her mistresses, who were taking a gentle siesta on their comfortable tent-bed—a bedstead whose posts had been decapitated to accommodate them to the lowly ceiling of the Miss Weblings' chamber.

The spinsters reposed side by side upon the coverlet, the County Chronicle spread under their feet to guard the spotless counterpane, their hair repapered, lest the corkscrew curls should relax from their wiry stiffness in the temporary dissolution of slumber. On hearing of Mr. Haggard's arrival the simultaneous movement of the sisters was to rush to the small square looking-glass, and take their hair out of papers; the next, to smooth out their ample muslin collars—assisted in this operation by Cynthia—and to adjust the velvet bands upon their foreheads. Then they washed their hands with sisterly familiarity in the same basin, not forgetting to expectorate genteelly in the water lest it should lead to unsisterly tiffs, and anon descended the corkscrew staircase.

In the parlour the greetings of last summer were gone through again with exact reproduction. The 'seedy' cake and the cowslip wine were brought out of the panelled cupboard, and Mr. Haggard was asked solemnly if he had dined. This time he was able to reply conscientiously, that he had eaten a hearty dinner of pork and

greens at a roadside inn; for people used to dine upon pork and greens in those days, and were not ashamed to own it.

'I am going to spend Sunday at Penmoyle,' said Joshua; there are friends I was not lucky enough to see last year; so I

have given myself a holiday to-morrow.'

'That's good news,' cried Deborah; 'and you'll stay here of course? Our spare room is always kept aired, though we don't often have a visitor, unless it's when old uncle Weston comes from Penzance.'

Small as the cottage was it boasted its spare bedchamber, over the best parlour—a room glorified by a good deal of fine art in the shape of various samplers executed in crewels by the Miss Weblings' prize pupils.

'I shall be very pleased to stay here,' replied Joshua, 'if

you're sure I sha'n't be putting you out.'

'Putting us out!' exclaimed the impulsive Priscilla; 'dear Mr. Haggard, when we value your acquaintance as one of our most blessed privileges!'

- 'And as for linen,' said the more practical Deborah, 'we've the stock of house-linen our dear mother left us—every bit of the yarn her own spinning—the sheets and table-cloths we top-sewed when we were children.'
- 'And now tell me how you have got on with Cynthia,' said Joshua, trying to feel as if the question were not one that touched him nearly—trying to approach the subject with the same equable spirit in which he would have discussed the welfare of any member of his little flock at Combhollow. 'Has she been docile and useful? Do you think you shall make her a good servant?'
- 'Mr. Haggard,' said Deborah, so solemnly that Joshua thought something bad was coming—he felt himself breathing quicker, as in a moment of fear—'Mr. Haggard, that girl is a treasure.'
  - 'Thank God for that!' exclaimed Joshua, with infinite relief.
- 'It's not many people would pick up such a pearl by the wayside; but it's natural that angels should come unawares to such a good man as you.'
- 'Never mind me,' interjected Joshua eagerly. 'Tell me about Cynthia.'
- 'I don't think there's a better girl in the West of England, or one that's quicker and neater with her hands. Of course sister and I have taken pains with her. I'm not going to deny that, or that we took all the more pains with her out of regard for you. But she has been so quick to learn, with her hands especially. I don't pretend to say that she has a powerful mind—not like sister Priscilla's, for instance.' (Priscilla screwed her lips together and tried not to look proud.) 'Not a mind to grasp long division or the genealogies of the tribes of Israel, or the wars with the Philistines.'

(Priscilla shook her head gravely, as if it held as much scriptural knowledge as Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.) 'But for handiness and willingness and neatness and goodness of heart, there's no one to surpass her. She nursed me beautifully for three weeks, when I had a bad attack of my quinsy last winter; and if you'd seen how prettily she ornamented this parlour with holly and greenstuff at Christmas time, you'd have been quite struck.'

'I am more pleased than I can tell you,' said Joshua; and the unwonted glow upon his dark cheek told that the pleasure was very real.

'Of course you'd naturally be anxious. It was an awful risk. I'm sure I used to wake in the middle of the night often, when she was first with us, and tremble for the silver teapot. She might have cut both our throats and gone off with the plate, if she'd been badly inclined.'

Both sisters shuddered at this appalling possibility.

'And she has learned to read, she tells me,' said Joshua.

'Bee-autifully!' exclaimed Priscilla. We never had a pupil, young or old, that learnt so quick. She said she wanted to learn, to please her kind friend who took her out of bondage—meaning you, Mr. Haggard. Many an evening has that poor child sat puzzling over her book, when she first began—and even the letters were some of them strange to her—and wouldn't leave off when we told her.'

'I am proud to think that I was not mistaken in her,' said Joshus, 'when I read truth and innocence in her countenance.'

'And there's something so genteel about her,' pursued Priscilla. 'She never presumes upon one's kindness, or forgets her station. I'm sure the way we've let her sit with us of an evening and taken her for walks would have turned some girls' heads; but she has always kept her place and respected ours.'

'It does my heart good to hear this account of her,' said Joshua. 'And now I'll go down the village and look in upon my old friends.

Mr. Martin still lives next the chapel, I suppose?'

'Yes, dear old gentleman; and though he's getting feeble and is not the preacher he used to be, people come from six miles off to hear him, and the chapel's so crowded that on warm Sundays sister and I are obliged to take peppermint lozenges to keep off the faintness. There's many a heart will be stirred if you preach to-morrow, Mr. Haggard.'

'Don't forget that we tea at five,' said Deborah.
'No, I shall be back by five,' replied Joshua slowly.

He had very little inclination to leave that best parlour of the Miss Weblings, although he had come to Penmoyle to see all his old friends. It was not to be supposed that he would waste two days of his earnest working life—a life in which leisure was almost unknown—upon an inquiry about the progress of that waif and stray

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he had picked up by the wayside. A letter would have served to make that inquiry. No, he had come to Penmoyle to see those brother Christians to whom he had preached justification by faith, a Saviour's infinite atonement of all human sin, years ago; he had come to talk with those in whose hearts he had been the first to kindle religious fervour.

He left the Miss Weblings' parlour with some sense of effort, notwithstanding; a kind of apathy as to those old friends of his seemed to have stolen upon him since his arrival at Penmoyle. He desired nothing so much as to sit in that neatly-ordered room and hear Cynthia read, or hear her mistresses praise her. But the call

of duty was paramount, so he took up his hat and went.

Mr. Martin was a little old man with white hair, who remembered John Wesley, and had imbibed his enthusiasm from that fountain of simple and spiritual earnestness. He was a good old man, and much beloved by his humble followers; and though he preached in a somewhat cracked and quavering treble, and spun the same thin thread of doctrine through many sermons to attenuation, and generally chose his text from some obscure passage in the minor Prophets, he was listened to with devout attention, and admired as an oracle. He was great at tea-meetings and love-feasts, and repeated his little elderly jokes and told the same anecdotes about the Wesleys year after year. He had some pretensions to the literary faculty, and had written an account of the last hours and death-bed conversations of an interesting member of his flock, a girl whose piety had been the delight of an admiring circle, and who had been cut off untimely by 'a consumption.' This little volume of fifty pages was more popular at Penmoyle than any of that pernicious literature which an unbelieving race accepted at the hands of such arch-offenders as Byron, Moore, Godwin, Monk Lewis, and Shelley-names which had been breathed as by some wandering blast from Pandemonium in the awe-struck ears of Penmoyle. inhabitant of this remote settlement, on entering the literary circles of the metropolis, would have been astonished to find that Mr. Martin's biography of Miss Elizabeth Lucas was not considered a classic, nor as familiar to the reading public as Rasselas or the Vicar of Wakefield.

On the female mind in Penmoyle the book had exercised as strong an influence as had the Confessions of Rousseau or the Sorrows of Werter on the world in general; and a young woman of Mr. Martin's flock would have considered that, next to marrying a rich farmer and driving one's own chaise-cart, the happiest destiny would be to die early and discourse wisely on one's death-bed, like Elizabeth Lucas.

Mr. Martin wore his literary laurels meekly, but, in his heart of hearts, was prouder of having written that little book than of all his long and blameless life and its good influence upon his fellow-men. He amused his leisure hours by mild coquetting with the Muses, and composed sacred verses of the feeblest strain, which he screwed out of his seething brain with infinite labour, and had some idea of publishing by subscription, could he but get the lines more of a length, and resolve his own doubts as to certain rhymes which necessity had constrained him to use, although his ear had not approved them.

This simple-minded pastor lived in a four-roomed cottage next his chapel—a cottage neatly furnished, and beautified not a little by various offerings from the Methodists of the district. An ancient widow, whose family and belongings were lost in the darkness of pre-historic Penmoyle, ministered to the good man's modest wants, and kept his habitation spotless, labouring at her mission with activity and industry which would have done credit to those younger servants who were known at Penmoyle as 'bits of girls.' This faithful house-keeper, neatly clad in a black gown, widow's cap, and muslin kerchief, opened the door to Joshua's knock. She had worn a widow's cap for the last forty years, and would have doubted her own identity had she seen herself in a glass with any other head-covering.

'Lor sakes,' she exclaimed, with a low curtsy, 'if it ain't

Mr. Haggard!'

As the cottage door opened straight into the parlour, Mr. Martin, writing with laborious slowness at his table, heard the ejaculation, and rose hastily to welcome his guest, with a formal cordiality full of a certain old-fashioned dignity, as of one who had been accustomed all his life to be respected and to confer a favour by his kindness.

'And what has brought my good friend this way?' he asked. 'Glad am I to see him once more beside my hearth. Go, get a mutton-chop or a steak, Martha, and cook it nicely for Mr. Haggard. I have a cask of cider from the same orchard as that you used to drink twenty years ago.'

'You needn't trouble about the chop, Mrs. Hope. I have dined, my dear sir; but I shall be pleased to drink your health in a glass of that excellent cider before I leave you. I am thankful to see

you looking hale and hearty.'

'Ay,' replied the old man, with a tremulous cheeriness, 'Providence has been very good to me. Except for a little stiffness in my joints in winter time, and a slight uncertainty in my hearing, which I can hardly call deafness, I might easily forget that I am getting old. I can still enjoy the manifold beauties of God's earth, and my books;' glancing with pride at his neatly-arranged library, guarded by the glass doors of an old-fashioned bookcase. 'I can still employ my leisure hours in poetic musings, which, although perchance beneath the regard of finite man, are, I venture to hope,

acceptable to an infinite God. Ah, my dearest friend, it is a strange and fearful blessing for the aged to be spared when Time's sickle mows down the youthful.'

Here the pastor's eye glittered with a tear of regret for his beloved pupil Elizabeth Lucas, and Joshua made haste to change the conversation. He had heard that story of Elizabeth Lucas's lingering illness and pious discourses a good many times from the gentle old pastor's lips, and rather dreaded a repetition thereof. The pious platitudes were milk for babes rather than meat for strong men; and although Joshua had a firm belief in the Christian graces of the departed Elizabeth, he was not quite clear as to her share in these holy dialogues; just as in reading the *Phaedo* some students may entertain a doubt as to which is Plato and which is Socrates.

Having fortunately escaped this conversational quicksand, in which he saw himself on the point of being ingulfed, Mr. Haggard and his elder friend talked pleasantly of each other's ministrations, and the welfare and progress of their particular sect, which, although taking its origin from the great evangelical movement begun by Wesley, was but a minor division of the dissenting Church. Mr. Martin talked of his crowded chapel; his night-school for farm-labourers; his afternoon class for young women in domestic service, which young persons of a superior social standing were invited to attend, could they so far subjugate their pride as to sit side by side with the hard-handed daughters of toil.

'That is a bright little creature over yonder,' said Mr. Martin, with a nod in the direction of the Miss Weblings' domicile; 'she has come to my class-meetings regularly, and has made wonderful progress. I never met with a clearer mind. I do not say that it is deep, or that she is a being of lofty aspirations, like my sainted Elizabeth—'

'I am delighted to hear you speak so kindly of her,' exclaimed Joshua. 'You have heard, I daresay—'

'How you rescued her from the children of Belial? Yes, my good friend, she has told me of your kindness with tears. She has a grateful and a tender heart; she has a pleasant voice too, and sings our hymns sweetly. It was but last Sabbath that I was moved by hearing her sing the "Land of Canaan." There were tones which reminded me of that heavenly-minded girl, whose last hours—'

'And my poor little waif and stray has made spiritual progress?'

'Undoubtedly. I don't think you could ask her a question about the Israelites in the desert, or the building of Solomon's temple, that she would fail to answer correctly. And now, my good friend, tell me how long you are going to stay among us, and if you will give us one of your powerful discourses to-morrow. We are

collecting funds for a new chapel, our present humble building being sorely inadequate. A sermon from you would insure a good collection.'

Joshua declared his willingness to assist so worthy a cause; and after half an hour's cheerful conversation, left his old friend to resume his gentle flirtation with the Nine, and went on to visit other acquaintances of the past.

Five o'clock found Mr. Haggard at the little green door, where Cynthia stood watching for him on the threshold, just as she had watched by the gate that afternoon.

'The tea's mashed,' she said brightly, 'and the ladies told me to watch for you.'

She darted back to the kitchen before he had time to reply, having the baking of certain rock-cakes, seedy and curranty, esteemed a delicacy in Penmoyle, on her mind. Mr. Haggard looked after her curiously, wondering at the difference between this light and airy form, just vanishing from his sight at the end of the passage, and the rotund and robust Sally who ministered to his wants at home. Yet both were of the same clay he reminded himself, and the one as precious in the sight of her Maker as the other.

The sisters Webling, glorified by additional embellishment in the way of ear-droppers and brooches and buckles—but not in their Sunday gowns, those Mr. Haggard would see to-morrow—received the minister amidst the stately elegance of the best parlour. There was the silver teapot he knew so well, with its horn handle and little perforated basket dangling at the spout; there were the willow-pattern cups and saucers, and crisp home-baked bread, and slices of ham garnished with parsley, and three new-laid eggs in glass egg-cups, and a plate of strawberries—quite a collation.

'I hope you have brought us a good appetite, dear Mr. Haggard,' said Priscilla.

'Indeed, Miss Priscilla, I am not accustomed to such luxuries. Our tea at home is a very plain meal. I was brought up to live plainly, and have brought up my children in the same way. But I have no doubt I shall do justice to your plenteous table.'

Cynthia came in with the rock-cakes, and retired as soon as she had set them on the table, dropping her modest curtsy as she went out at the door.

Somehow, in spite of the strong tea, the new-laid eggs, the excellent ham which the hospitable sisters pressed upon him, in spite of that exalted appreciation of his own merits which breathed in every sentence spoken by these spinsters, the tea-drinking, protracted for an hour or more, seemed rather a weary business to Joshua. He found his thoughts wandering backward to the little red-floored kitchen, luminous in the rosy sunset, and the gracious figure of girlhood by the open casement. He found himself reflecting what a

blessed thing it was to have rescued this wild weed, neglected by the roadside, and to find her blossoming so fair a flower, instead of listening, as he ought in common courtesy to have listened, to Deborah's account of one of her old scholars who had gone to America, and was on the high-road to a fortune, and who had avouched in a letter to his mother—a letter written on the other side of the broad Atlantic—that he should never have come to any good if the Miss Weblings had not taught him his multiplication-table.

'He was a dull boy,' said Deborah; 'many's the time I've had to put the dunce's cap on him and stand him up on a form, though it went against me. And the trouble I had over his pot-hooks—there, it was really trying. But it's nice to think that he should remember and be grateful, so far away. It speaks well for human nature, you know,' concluded Miss Webling in a patronising tone, as if she belonged to a different species.

After tea came the usual request for a chapter and Mr. Haggard's exposition thereof; and Cynthia, having removed the tea-things, took her seat below the salt, that is to say, on the chair nearest the door; while the spinsters, each seated in her particular chair, straightened their long backs and folded their mittened hands and assumed exactly the same expression of countenance.

This time Joshua took the story of the traveller coming down to Jerusalem who fell among thieves. Perhaps some faint resemblance between that sacred record and his own rescue of the girl yonder may have influenced his selection, but he hardly owned as much to himself. His simple yet eloquent commentary touched the girl deeply; every word of those gospels was now familiar to her. She had read the New Testament with fervid interest. The sacred story, new to her girlish mind, had been verily a revelation, and she had accepted this new creed—the first ever offered to her understanding—with faith and affection that knew no limit. It seemed all intensely real to her ardent nature. Her imagination pictured every scene, filled up every detail: she could see the divine face shining upon her, the little children gathered round the gracious Teacher; the blind, the sick, the lame, the leper, the outcast, seeking comfort and healing from that inexhaustible fountain of mercy. She saw all these things in holy waking dreams—saw them as really as some hysterical nun in her ecstatic trance.

But for Joshua Haggard she would never have known this blessed history, never have belonged to those happy and elected souls chosen to share the Master's rest when earth's brief pilgrimage was over. But for him she would have lived her wretched life among the lost ones, doomed to perdition after death, shut out for ever from the glorious light which shone upon that happy section of humanity selected for salvation. That without Joshua's mediation she might have come into the Christian fold, that some other friendly hand

might have opened the door to her, was an idea that never occurred to her mind, more inclined to enthusiasm than to logic. She accepted Joshua as her spiritual sponsor, the benefactor who had given her the heritage of salvation, and her gratitude was measureless as her value of the blessings she had so nearly lost.

There were tears in her eyes as he dwelt on the story of the

Samaritan.

'You did much more than that for me,' she said softly when he had finished. 'It was not my body you saved, but my soul. When I stopped to rest on the common that day, I did not know that I had a soul, or that heaven was any more than the blue sky where the birds sing.'

'It's wonderful to think of,' exclaimed Priscilla, proud of her pupil; 'and now she can say off the books of the Bible as quick as anything without missing one. Let the minister hear you, Cynthia.'

The girl obeyed, and rattled over the titles of the holy books in a string, as she had been taught by Priscilla.

'Now let's have the counties of England and Wales, my dear.'

Cynthia repeated an ancient rhymed list of the shires, which sounded like an incantation. Her preceptress listened approvingly, with her head on one side, in a critical attitude, proud of her work.

'I should like to hear you read a chapter in the Gospel,

Cynthia,' said Mr. Haggard.

Whereupon the girl turned over the leaves of her Testament thoughtfully, and then read the story of the raising of Lazarus. She read beautifully, with feeling and understanding in every tone. Tears of gladness filled Joshua's eyes as he listened. This was the richest reward he had ever reaped for his good works.

When she had read her chapter, Cynthia withdrew modestly to her more correct sphere in the kitchen, and resumed her plain sewing by the last rays of summer daylight, while the Miss Weblings

entertained Joshua for the rest of the evening.

At half-past nine, quite a late hour for that feminine household, Joshua was invited to say an evening-prayer; and Cynthia again appeared at the tinkling of a small handbell which Priscilla held outside the door; and after the prayer, which was long and fervent, like all Joshua's prayers, and personal also, glancing at his blessed work in this lowly handmaiden's conversion from the paths of darkness and error, Cynthia was ordered to sing a hymn.

She stood before them with hands meekly folded, and in a voice clear as a bird's, a bright and silvery soprano, sang one of the favourite hymns of that particular sect—simple not unmelodious verses telling of the happy land beyond death's awful river—verses set to a tune that had a lively lilt in it, and was hardly so sugges-

tive of devotion as one of Mozart's sacred numbers.

After the hymn Joshua was pressed to refresh himself once more with cowslip wine and seedy cake; and on refusing those luxuries, he was escorted, with a newly set candle and as much ceremony as a corkscrew or belfry staircase will admit, to his lavender-scented chamber, where the dimity draperies were starched to such a degree that they stood alone.

The midsummer moon looked in at him through the diamond panes of his casement as he laid himself down, a little tired after a twenty-mile walk and the various emotions of the day. What was this strange feeling, too sweet for pain, too thrilling for happiness, which swelled his breast? What this unknown rapture which moved him to tears?

'Thank God!' he ejaculated involuntarily, yet scarcely knew what new blessing that was which moved him to such thankfulness. He dared not question his own thoughts. He was like one awakened out of a trance who finds himself in a land where all things are strange. He sank to sleep with that vague mysterious happiness in mind and heart, fell asleep and dreamed that he had passed into that happier land on the farther side of the dark river, and that the first to give him greeting there was Cynthia with a face like an angel's.

#### CHAPTER X.

## O, LET MY JOYS HAVE SOME ABIDING!

Placid and happy, after its quiet fashion, was the Sabbath which followed. The scene of Joshua Haggard's life was so rarely shifted, that he may be pardoned by the hearth goddess for feeling a certain satisfaction in finding himself away from home. The novelty of Sunday at Penmoyle was pleasing. It was a relief not to receive exactly the same greetings he had received last Sunday; not to hear precisely the same speeches, accompanied by the same tones and looks and becks and nods, and even the same oratorical flourishes of a stout green-cotton umbrella or a neatly-polished oak sapling; and a relief perhaps to the eye not to see those particular coal-scuttle bonnets or bottle-green spencers which adorned his own Bethel. The differences between Combhollow and Penmoyle were only differences of detail; but he felt that he was in a strange land, farther west, among people still more simple than his own flock, and people who loved him no less.

His sermon was a success. Sixpences and shillings rattled into the metal platters which the smug-faced deacons, in their glossy Sunday coats, held at the doors of the chapel. The temple was crowded to its utmost capacity, and handkerchiefs were used freely for fanning ruddy faces or for mopping perspiring foreheads, while peppermint lozenges and smelling-salts were interchanged among friends.

In a corner of the Miss Weblings' narrow deal pew sat Cynthia, in a straw gipsy-hat, her head thrown back a little as she looked up at the preacher. He saw those spiritual blue eyes gazing upward—saw and was moved by that unknown passion of joy or pain which had thrilled him last night. He tried to forget that intent face—tried to thrust every earthly influence out of his thoughts as he pleaded for his Creator's glory, for due honour to be paid to the Lord of heaven and earth, as he urged with warmth the duty of sacrifice and unselfishness upon that open-mouthed bucolic flock—the duty of surrendering something of earth's enjoyments, some portion of their temporal blessings, to render homage to Him who gives them all.

'If we had a friend who was always showering gifts upon us,' he urged in his familiar way, 'should we begrudge him some small offering now and then in return? Should we take all and give nothing? Should we not be miserly and mean if we did? Should we not secretly despise our own meanness, even if we contrived to hide it from the eyes of men? And we have a Benefactor who is always giving. Our sleeping and our waking, our uprising and our downsitting, our health, our strength, our household joys, our homes, our fields, our gardens,-all are gifts from Him. Shall we offer nothing for all these things, not even a house in which to worship the universal Giver of good? My brethren, the pagans, whose gods were foolishness, made their temples so beautiful, that the beauty of the tabernacle has preserved the memory of the god. Yes, for two thousand years these childish fables have lived in the memory of men, because those who believed them spared neither gold nor silver to testify to their belief. The gods of the Greeks were as real to the Greeks as your God is to you, and the splendour of their temples has remained to posterity as a testimony to the reality of their faith. These were foolish heathens, the children of Shall we, the children of light, leave nothing behind us upon earth to show our descendants that we too were in earnestthat the God of Truth has had as faithful followers as the god of lies?

Verse by verse he read them—commenting as he went along—the description of Solomon's temple, his picturesque mind revelling in the gorgeousness of the record. He was asking for funds for a chapel, which might be built for three or four hundred pounds; and as he enlarged in glowing language on the glories of that Jewish shrine—the carven cherubim and palm-trees and flowers overlaid with gold, the door-posts of olive-tree and the doors of fir, the floor overlaid with gold within and without, the pillars of brass and the chapiters of molten brass, the nets of checker-work and wreaths of chain-work, the lily-work and pomegranates, and that mighty sea of molten brass standing upon twelve sculptured oxen—his hearers

thought within themselves that it behoved Penmoyle to do something; not to be behind the Jews of old, people with hook-noses, and perhaps old-clothes bags and a plurality of hats, whom folks looked down upon nowadays. And Solomon, who at his best was only a Jew, had been able to build this sublime temple, nay, if tradition were to be credited, sent as far as Penzance for tin and copper ore wherewith to accomplish this great work. This moved them much more than any idea about the Greeks, whom they depictured to themselves vaguely and variously, according to their several imaginations.

To Cynthia this sermon, which might have seemed trite and commonplace to that mordant modern intellect which, like the Athenian mind, spends itself wholly in going after every new orator, from Monsignor Capel to Moody and Sankey, -- to Cynthia this sermon was full of colour and meaning. Of romance she knew nothing; poetry was a dark language to her, save the mute poetry of stars or flowers, earth's loveliness or heaven's sublimity. had never heard fine music or seen a stage-play, except the rude representations of showmen at a fair; eloquence, pictures painted in words, were new to her, and the listened spellbound. She could have given you no definition of greatness, yet in her mind she was assured that Joshua was a great man. She thought of St. Paul holding a vast and adverse throng by the magic of his discourse, and it seemed to her no blasphemy to compare Joshua with that saint and apostle. Her youth, her ardour, had nothing on which to fasten except this ideal of a good and perfect man. She was grateful to her mistresses for their small kindnesses and indulgences; but she vaguely felt the element of ridiculousness in the little fidgety ways and petty particularities of these elderly damsels, and the flowers of her fancy did not entwine themselves around the images of Miss Deborah and Miss Priscilla. The garden of her young mind was a fertile soil, however, and the flowers that sprung there must have something about which to cling and blossom, so they wreathed their ductile tendrils round that sturdy oak Joshua.

The afternoon was occupied by a second service, in which the mild exhortations of Mr. Martin had a somewhat sleepy sound to those who had dined heavily. Spirits weighed down by roast meat and potatoes, and a regretful conviction that the Sunday joint had been a thought too greasy, joined languidly in prayers and hymns; and there was a sense of relief when the lengthy service came to a close, and the congregation poured out of the oven-like chapel into the sweet fresh air.

Several friends dropped in upon the Miss Weblings after service: some who had known Joshua of old, others who were eager to be presented to him. Mrs. Gibbs, the butcher's wife, in her green watered silk, and with a gold watch—one of the few gold watches

known to be extant in Penmoyle—reposing on her portly side, almost the grandest lady in the village. Miss Toothy, from the general shop, who was somewhat eccentric in her attire, but reported wealthy. Mr. and Mrs. Pamble, tenant-farmers of some importance, occupying a square stone house on the outskirts of Penmoyle—large people both, and given to pomposity, as conscious that they had never been a day behind with the half-year's rent, and could afford to trust in Providence when times were bad, having laid by a small fortune before the Peace.

These filled Miss Webling's parlour to overflowing, and taxed the resources of the household in the way of teapots. If Cynthia had been less handy, things could not have gone off so genteelly; and the sisters might have been lowered in the esteem of Mrs. Pamble, who really condescended somewhat in visiting them, by sloppy tea; but Cynthia contrived to have a fresh brew in the every-day crockery teapot ready to replenish that silver vessel which adorned the tray. She brought in the rock-cakes hot, and nestling in a clean napkin, and she was never behindhand with bread-and-butter of the genteelest thinness.

'That's a handy girl of yours, Miss Webling,' said Mrs. Pamble approvingly, when the chapel and the day's sermons and the possibilities of the building-fund had been amply discussed.

'And an uncommon good-looking one too,' added the farmer, in his beefy voice. 'You won't have her long, miss, I fancy; some of the young chaps will be wanting her to get married. These here pretty ones go off the hooks so soon.'

The spinsters bridled, taking this as in somewise a personal affront. They had been accounted personable in their time, they could have informed Mr. Pamble, though they had not gone off the hooks.

'If she's as sensible as I give her credit for being, she'll be in no hurry to get married,' replied Deborah, bridling. 'Single life is not without its advantages.'

Miss Webling knew that Mrs. Pamble was one of those disagreeable women who are as proud of having secured a husband and added largely to the population as if those achievements were novel and remarkable facts in the history of womankind.

'Ah, but they're all glad to get a husband; even the sensiblest of them,' chuckled the farmer. 'They're all ready to say snip to the first as says snap. It's a feminine failing.'

At which vulgar speech Mrs. Pamble and Mrs. Gibbs laughed until their silk gowns, or the rigorous corsets under the gowns, creaked ominously.

Miss Toothy looked daggers. She had never said snip to anyone's snap, and she felt that the conversation was becoming odiously personal.

'Of course I'm not eluding to ladies like you,' said the farmer, perchance perceiving that he was on dangerous ground, and accenting his speech by a slap on Priscilla's spare shoulder. 'You've had your offers and throwed over your sweethearts—you and Miss Deborah and Miss Toothy yonder; but servant-gals and suchlike ain't so partickler. A husband's a husband to their mind, so long as he's got a hat, and ain't blind or deaf. They wouldn't object to his being dumb, I daresay, for the sake of havin' all the talkin'.'

This being an old-established joke, everybody except Joshua

laughed heartily.

'She's got very uncommon-coloured hair, that gal of yours, Miss Webling,' said Mrs. Pamble. 'I don't know as I call it pretty for a young woman, though it's very winning in a baby. My Jimmy has hair just that colour; and when he's naughty it goes more against me to slap him than it does the dark-haired ones—he's got such an innercent look with him. But I think flaxen hair's rather too simple-like for a young woman; it gives her a foolish look.'

'What matter looks if she is not foolish?' said Joshua almost sternly. 'If you can bring up your daughters to be as sensible and as pious as that servant-girl, you will be a happy woman, Mrs. Pamble; and if God makes them as lovely, pray to Him to give them hearts as pure and minds as innocent as hers.'

From any one else such freedom of speech would have offended the farmer's wife; but she had come to see Joshua as a great preacher, and one must expect hard sayings from prophets and privileged persons of that kind. She only sniffed dubiously, and looked at her watch, a homely silver one, which compared disadvantageously with that shining golden timekeeper pendent from Mrs. Gibbs's waistband.

'I'm afraid we must be going,' said Mrs. Pamble, as if loth to pronounce a sentence which must naturally afflict the company. 'There's the dairy never gets properly looked after unless I'm standing behind that girl of mine.'

'Ah,' grunted Mr. Pamble, 'you women can do nothing without a lot o' cackle. Missusses and maids is pretty much alike. There's so much scolding goes on in the dairy I wonder it don't turn the milk; no need for rennet, I should think, where there's women's tongues.'

'It isn't the women that sit arguing about nothing for three hours at a stretch in a public-house,' observed Mrs. Pamble, as she drew her white Paisley shawl across her robust shoulders, and skewered it on her breast with a large mosaic brooch representing St. Peter's at Rome; and after this home-thrust, she rose to depart, the farmer meekly following.

These magnates of the land being gone, after leave-takings at

once friendly and ceremonious, Miss Toothy discovered that she was wanted at home, having promised her girl an evening out; and Mrs. Gibbs pronounced herself pledged to her domestic in the like manner. So there was a clearance of the smart little parlour, and the Miss Weblings folded their hands and leaned back in their chairs, feeling as exhausted after this unwonted assembly as a lady of fashion when her reception of three or four hundred of the upper ten thousand is over, and life's green curtain falls on the social comedy.

'I hope I was polite to them all, Priscilla,' said Deborah somewhat anxiously; 'but I felt a little confused in my head by their all dropping in together. I'm afraid Miss Toothy might feel herself passed over. She's rather hard to draw out; and the Pambles are

so lively.'

'Miss Toothy hasn't seen much company,' replied Priscilla excusingly. 'You can't expect her to be very conversable. But she's a great reader, and knows more about politics and the Royal Family than anybody in Penmoyle. She has friends in London that send her a newspaper every week; and she's got some nice books too, Mr. Haggard; she lent me the Romance of the Forest last winter, and I read it aloud to Debbie in the long evenings. I don't see any harm in a good novel once in a way, if you take your time over it, and don't loll by the fireside half the day, poking your nose into a book and letting your house go to rack and ruin.'

'I have forbidden my daughter to read novels,' replied Joshua, finding himself thus directly appealed to, 'lest the unrealities she would find in them should give her a false picture of life, and encourage her to form baseless hopes or foolish desires. But when she is married and the mother of a family she may seek amusement for an evening hour in some innocent fiction, and be none the worse for it. And, of course, at your discreet age, Miss Priscilla, an appeal

to the imagination can do no harm.'

'There never was a more particular man than my father,' said Deborah. 'He couldn't abide the sight of a book, when once his children had learned to read, except the Bible on Sundays and Dr. Watts's Hymns. He said books about a place were just an encouragement to idleness, and that as long as women had the use of their hands they ought never to waste time in reading. Yet, you see, Priscilla and me wouldn't be as independent as we are if Providence hadn't given us a taste for learning.'

Joshua bowed assent. He had been somewhat wearied by the tea-drinking, the fulsome compliments which Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Pamble had paid him, the stuffy atmosphere of the parlour smelling of toast and bread-and-butter. He was yearning for a breath of

fresh air.

'I think I'll take a turn in that neat little garden of yours,' he said, as if asking permission of the sisters, who both had a

drowsy look, and regarded him blinkingly, like owls in a zoological collection.

'Do, dear Mr. Haggard; and try and get an appetite for your

supper. You made a very poor dinner.'

It was a minor duty of hospitality with the Miss Weblings to pretend to think that their guests had fared badly, just as it was the major duty to press the viands upon a visitor's consideration until he was so obliging as to over-eat himself.

There was no way of reaching the garden save through the kitchen, so to the kitchen Joshua went. The door at the end of the narrow little passage stood open, and the westward-fronting casement was shining like a jewel at the end of the vista. kitchen was newly swept and garnished; no sign of unwashed teathings or broken victuals; the polished grate winking and twinkling in the red light from a neat little fire; the red-brick floor spotless as if it were a floor in a picture; every pot and pan arranged with the grace that belongs to perfect order; a dark-brown jug of roses and serings on the window-sill; but the figure Joshua had expected to see by the casement was not there. Cynthia had gone for a walk, he thought; had gone to meet and mingle with those other handmaidens whose privilege it was to enjoy a Sabbath-evening ramble; perhaps to keep company-odious phrase-with some rural swain. The idea was repulsive to him. It seemed to him that there was pollution in such contact.

He went through the tiny scullery and out into the garden, which he had surveyed from the window that midsummer evening just a year ago when he bade Cynthia good-bye. There was not much to admire in the garden, perhaps, save for those eyes which are in the habit of looking at all rustic things as pictures, and which can see a study in brown in an old well and an empty bucket, or a nocturne in purple and gold in a cottage thatch steeped in moon-To Joshua, whose only experience of landscape-painting had been derived from tea-trays, that sloping bit of garden seemed commonplace enough; even for politeness' sake he would not have gone so far as to say that he thought it pretty, and yet it charmed him somehow; there was a beauty in this vulgar rusticity which he felt, although he could not recognise or understand it. The picture of grassplot and flower-bed and crooked old apple-trees spreading their gray branches against the yellow sky; the sweet-pea hedge, the stocks, the sweet-williams, the blush-roses, the thymy potherbs; the little thatched shed for the pig yonder in an angle of the hawthorn hedge; the steep bank where the strawberries grew,—the homely charm of this picture crept into his heart unawares. He walked slowly across the little grassplot, where a self-sufficing bantam was pecking at imaginary worms in dignified solitude; he ascended the narrow path, which had been cut into steps where the slope was

steepest; and on the higher ground by the hedge discovered Cynthia standing by the pigsty, and actually exchanging endearments with the pig, whose black head lolled across the edge of his sty, and who expressed the gratification he derived from having his ears pulled in a series of confidential grunts.

'I thought you had gone for a walk, Cynthia,' said Mr. Hag-

gard.

'No, sir. I go across the fields sometimes, and as far as the copse'—pointing to a dark waving line against the sunset—'and gather a bunch of wild flowers, when the ladies give me leave.'

'You go with your friends, I suppose; some of the young women

in service here?'

'No, sir. I have no friends except my mistresses.'

'And no sweetheart, Cynthia?'

'No,' she answered, with a curious little smile.

What a relief it was to find that her girlish fancy had not idealised some boor!

'Ah, the time will come when you will begin to think of a sweetheart, I daresay; but I'm glad it hasn't come yet. I am going for a stroll across the fields, as far as that wood, perhaps. Will you come with me, and show me where your wild flowers grow?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And are you quite happy here, Cynthia?' asked Joshua, when they had walked a little way. There were sheep in the meadow, and the sheep-bell was ringing with a pleasant sound in the twilight.

'Yes, sir; quite happy; most of all when you come here.'

'That is not often, Cynthia,' he answered, his dark eyes softening to tenderness as they looked at her. Why did she say these things in her thoughtless innocence, and why should words so simple, a mere childish expression of grateful affection, set his heart beating?

'No,' answered Cynthia; 'it isn't often you come, sir. But

it is something to think of, and something to remember.'

'I cannot tell you what pleasure your progress has given me,' said Joshua gravely, but with a tenderness in his voice that was quite involuntary. 'I have thought of you often in the year that has gone, and have supplicated for you in my prayers every day of my life. But I never hoped to reap so rich a harvest. I never thought God would reward me so bounteously—to find your intelligence so bright, your heart so pious, your conduct so exemplary. It is very sweet to me; sweeter than words can say.'

There was a mist before his eyes as he looked away to the broken line of wood yonder, not trusting himself to look at his

protégée.

'Could I do less than strive hard to learn what you wished me to learn, sir?' asked Cynthia. 'Can I ever forget what you have done for me? I was a heathen, as bad as those poor creatures the

missionary told us about last winter. I was left outside in the darkness. I must have gone to the habitation of the lost but for you. I pray for you night and day; but my prayers are so little, they can never repay you. I wish I could be your servant, that I might work my fingers to the bone to prove my gratitude. I pray for you, I think of you, I dream of you sometimes; and I see your face all shining, with a glory upon it, like Stephen's when the wicked Jews stoned him.'

'Foolish dreams, my dear. I am neither saint nor hero; only a common man, with all our common infirmities; prone to sin when tempted, and chiefly blest in having led a life exempt from temptation to do wrong. Providence has been very good to me, Cynthia; my lines have been cast in pleasant places. I have never known hardships or ill-usage as you have, poor fragile child. No dark shadow has ever fallen across my path.'

'It would be hard if you had sorrows to bear, sir; you who are so good,' said Cynthia. 'Miss Priscilla has told me about you: how you used to preach to the rough miners—men almost as wild as savages—and how their hearts were melted; how you used to walk many miles and suffer hardships, for the sake of doing good and teaching God's word, when you had a comfortable home, where you might have stayed if you had chosen. She told me that you offended your father by field-preaching, and that you were likely to have lost all the money he had to leave you, yet you never gave way. Was not that being a hero?'

'No, my dear; it was only being steadfast. The man who is without steadfastness will neither do good to others nor to himself. I saw that there were waste lands to be made ready for harvest, and I put my hand to the plough. God gave me health and strength, and love of the work. It would have gone much harder with me to stay at home behind my father's counter than to bear the worst hardships that ever befell me in my wanderings.'

'Yes, I can understand that,' said the girl, looking up at him full of enthusiasm; 'that is because you are good and great. It was sweeter to you to help others than to be happy yourself. Every soul snatched from darkness and death was a rich harvest. Some of those you have saved are in heaven now. How sweet it must be for you to think that they are pleading for you at the throne of God!'

'My dear child, you let your affection carry you too far. I have but done a humble share of a great work; I only tread in the footsteps of greater men who have gone before. I am but one of many.'

'The Bible does not say that,' replied Cynthia. '"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."'

'That was in the beginning, Cynthia, when God's light was but

dawning on the darkness of this world. The prayer has been heard, and the labourers now are many. Let us pray that they may labour aright. You have a lively and ardent mind, my dear; God grant it may never be led astray. For a nature so fervent, so ready to admire and believe, an evil world is full of snares and springes; but so long as you are content to remain at Penmoyle with our kind friends, I feel assured you will be safe and happy. The life is somewhat monotonous, I daresay, but I hope you will not grow weary of it.'

'I shall have your coming to look forward to,' said Cynthia.

'And perhaps in time, if you advance steadily with your education, the Miss Weblings will let you teach in the school; and by and by, as they get into years, they may give you the entire management of their pupils; and you will be doing a holy and useful work, and occupying an important place in your little world. So you see, Cynthia, you have something better than domestic service to look forward to, if you go on improving yourself.'

'I shall try to do that, to please you,' replied Cynthia. 'I never forget anything you say to me. I think I could tell you every word you have said, from the time you first spoke to me on the common.'

Joshua was silent. There are some emotions whose ineffable sweetness is akin to pain—there are thrilling moments in which the soul burns with a rapture that is almost agony. How was he to construe these innocent expressions of regard, these little gushes of grateful feeling? Could they, did they, mean something warmer than regard, something deeper than gratitude?

They had crossed a couple of meadows and come to the edge of the copse by this time. It was only a narrow strip of wood, pinetrees for the most part, dividing one farm from another—a ragged edge of wilderness upon the skirts of cultivation and fertility; but to Joshua, that Sabbath evening, it was solemn as that darksome dell Dante walked in—a forest full of mystery and mystic awe. He could scarcely see his companion's face under the pine-trees. It was shadowy as the face of a spirit.

'It is too late to find any flowers,' said Cynthia; 'but this was a lovely place in the spring. There were violets and wild crocuses, and bluebells and wind flowers. There are rabbits too; look—do you see them flashing past that dark-red trunk yonder?'

Joshua was too preoccupied in spirit to look at rabbits. He walked with his head bent, his hands clasping his stout oak stick, his lips tightly drawn, as if he were trying to solve some problem. One might suppose that he had forgotten the existence of his companion.

He was putting curious questions to himself: 'If I were so foolish—if I, who have thought myself so strong, should be weak

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enough to lay down my life at this girl's feet, to set all my hopes on her, to give her the rest of my days—would there be any going backward in such an act? Is it sinful to love her for her youth and her beauty, her sweet tones and looks and fond winning ways? Is the attraction that draws me to her despite myself sensual or devilish, a snare of Satan set to catch me in my pride, or is the charm as innocent as it seems to me to-night? God enlighten me and give me grace to be wise; for, whether it be for good or ill, I love her.'

Silver arrows of pale summer moonlight pierced the feathery pine-branches, evening's breath crept through the wood with a plaintive sound that was half whisper, half sigh. It was time that Joshua and his companion should go back to the white cottage yonder on

the lower ground across the meadows.

'It is getting late, sir,' said Cynthia; 'the ladies will be wanting me.'

'Yes, Cynthia; but I have a question to ask before we go. Soon after daybreak to-morrow I shall be on my way home—for I mean to walk the best part of the way—and then, unless you wish, I shall not see you for a year—perhaps never again; for who can tell how your mind may change in a year?'

'It can never change so as to forget your goodness, sir.'

'Child, you make too much of my goodness. What I did for you I would have done for the lowest, the ugliest, a leper standing outside the gate and crying, Unclean, unclean! I would have gathered a weed by the wayside, my dear, and cared for it as truly as I cared for the flower. But God chose that I should gather the fairest flower that ever grew in His earthly garden, and keep and cherish it to adorn His heavenly paradise. And this sweet flower, unawares, has grown very dear to me. Cynthia, in your childlike gratitude you have said many words of which perchance you have not weighed the meaning. You have spoken lightly out of the innocence of your mind, but your words have gone deep into my heart. You have talked of being my servant, of working for me all the days of my life. Look up at me, love, with those sweet eyes; look at me, my cherished one, my darling, with the straight look that goes from soul to soul, and tell me if you could love me well enough to be my wife—love me well enough to live with me, and be a part of my life, the blessedest, brightest, fairest part of life, all that this earth holds for me of human happiness. I have given my daughter to her lover; henceforth I hold the second place in her heart. Lord, let me have something that shall be all my own! I have tasted but little of temporal joys; I have given my hopes and desires Before age creeps on, before my day is done, let me have something on which to pour forth my treasure of earthly love; let me be blessed like Abraham and Thy chosen ones of old, in the sacred joys of home. Child, child, it is the cry of a strong man's

heart that goes forth to thee. Answer, and answer faithfully. Do

you love me well enough to be my wife?'

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He held her in his arms, held her to his heart, looking down into her eyes. They had both grown accustomed to the half light of the wood by this time, and saw each other's faces very clearly; hers looking upward, pale, earnest, full of sweetness and a rapturous content, as of one in sight of her earthly heaven; his whitened with suppressed feeling, the mouth firmly set, the eyes grave and sombre.

'Answer, love, answer; and as God sees us here in this wood,

under this evening sky, answer truly.'

'I love you well enough to be your slave,' she said in a low voice—'well enough to serve you barefoot and in chains, and to be made happy by one kindly look from your eyes. I could never be your equal—could never feel myself good enough to sit by your side, to be called by your name; but I love you with all my heart and strength and mind, as I have been taught to love God. Here, on my knees, saviour, protector, friend, I give you my love, my life, myself.'

She slipped from his breast to his feet before he was aware, and knelt there with clasped hands, looking up at him—a lovely image of devotion.

'Not at my feet, but next my heart, dearest,' he cried, raising her from that humble posture. 'You have made me happy beyond my measure of earthly blessedness. If I could have known, when the path seemed most difficult, that behind the curtain of long years God held this joy in store for me, it would have been like a star shining on me, and beckoning me on. How light all present labours, all present perplexities would have seemed, measured against this reward!'

The moon shone full on the face lying on his breast. Purity, innocence, truth, a humble childlike love, were written there—love so blended with reverence that it had something devotional in its character. Why should the young heart ever change or fall away from affection so pure in its beginning, so holy in its growth? Why, indeed, save for the reason spoken of by the Prophet: 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?'

A moment never to be forgotten—a solemn crisis in life's history to be remembered with awe in all the years to come—a moment in which earth and earthly things seem to fall away, and spirit speaks to spirit.

They went back through the dewy fields together, Cynthia's hand in Joshua's—the hand which was his own henceforward—a symbol of their life-long union. The sheep were running about the field, and the bell ringing. The church-clock struck nine with a sonorous knell, like the bell of Time counting the measure of man's years.

A little while, a little while, and the end shall come. While your heart beats so passionately, while your hopes build so boldly, while your fancy makes palaces and earthly paradises to dwell in, time is passing, and the end is at hand. Life is but a journey, and the home where you are happiest is only an inn, from which you must be gone to-morrow.

'Dear heart alive!' cried Deborah, waking from her gentle nap to find herself in darkness; 'what's become of Cynthia, and why hasn't she brought candles and the supper-tray? We must have been asleep ever so long.'

'The heat quite overcame me,' said Priscilla, 'and Mr. Pamble is so noisy; his coarse jokes and loud vulgar laugh gave me the headache. I'm afraid Mr. Haggard must have been shocked with

him.'

'I could see it in his face,' replied Deborah.

Cynthia came in with a pair of mould candles in shining brass candlesticks and snuffer-tray to match. Joshua followed, grave of countenance, and paler than usual.

'How tired you look, dear Mr. Haggard!' cried Priscilla. 'I'm afraid the sermon this morning and those noisy Pambles have wearied you. You must have a glass of cowslip wine this minute; it's very reviving.'

Joshua consented, absently, to be revived, and sipped the home-made nectar with a dreamy look, while the sisters watched him curiously. He looked like one whose spirit has detached itself temporarily from the flesh. The body was there, but the eyes saw not, the lips spoke not; it was a mere automatic body.

'I'm afraid he's ill,' whispered Priscilla to Deborah, 'and not a

drop of brandy in the house.'

Joshua looked up presently, and saw two pairs of affrighted eyes gazing at him as at a spectre.

'I am ready to read and pray with you, dear friends, at the close

of this peaceful day,' he said.

'It has been a day that will be remembered in Penmoyle for many a year to come,' exclaimed the ardent Priscilla.

In the placid monotony of her life the advent of such a man as Joshua made an event of mark. She was not likely to forget his rare appearances in that remote village. She had indeed cherished his image for these fifteen years past—ever since his widowhood made it a lawful thing to worship him with a more individual regard than that reverent affection which the flock gives its shepherd.

Joshua opened his pocket Bible, and read the second chapter of Ruth; Cynthia seated meekly in her accustomed place by the door. In his commentary on the text he spoke of that instinct of the heart which has been called love at first sight, but which is rather an

inspiration, a divine prompting of the spirit, which leads man to his fittest helpmate. He touched tenderly on the favour which the gentle Moabitess found in the sight of the stranger; how his heart went forth to her at the very first, even before his servants had told him her pathetic story. He dwelt on the blessedness of such an union, and how God had crowned this marriage with richest honour, His chosen servant David being descended from this stem.

Priscilla wept copiously, her sentimental soul moved deeply by Joshua's discourse; and after he had said his evening prayer, she approached him with a little gush of rapture, and exclaimed:

'Dear Mr. Haggard, it has been my privilege often to hear you eloquent, but your words were never so melting as they have been to-night. The hardest heart must have shed tears,' added Miss Priscilla, too enthusiastic to care for anatomical truth.

Joshua blushed; yes, through the dark clear skin there glowed an actual blush, as he looked at the Miss Weblings almost sheepishly.

'I thought that tender story would win your sympathy,' he said; 'and I am glad, for I want you to look with added favour upon my Ruth.'

He put his arm round Cynthia and drew her to his side. The fair-haired child nestled there, looking up at her mistresses half shyly, half proudly.

'What!' cried Priscilla, with a shrill scream; 'you don't mean...'

'I am like Boaz,' he said; 'I have no need to tarry any longer in doubtfulness of my own heart. This damsel has found grace in mine eyes, albeit she is a stranger. Heaven gave her to me that summer-day, on Springfield Common. Heaven has given me new thoughts and new hopes since I have known her. I am more blessed in having found her than if all the riches of all the mines in Cornwall had been poured into my lap. God give me grace to love and cherish her, and to make the life she has trusted to me happy.'

'You are going to marry that child!' cried Priscilla, plucking at the velvet circlet on her brow in the wild agitation of the moment. 'You, a sober serious man of forty and upwards, a chit younger than your daughter!'

'If I am not too old to find a place in her heart, I care not how young she is. It will be all the sweeter duty to protect and cherish her.'

Priscilla cast away her velvet head-band, reckless of the little mourning brooch, with her father's silver hairs behind a tiny square of crystal, which confined it on her intellectual brow. She looked wildly round the best parlour, gave a stifled shriek, a gurgle or two, flung herself on the chintz-covered sofa, grasping the hard bolster convulsively in her agony, and went into vehement hysterics.

She lay there gurgling and choking, with occasional bursts of shrill laughter, for the next ten minutes, while cold water was sprinkled over her head and face, to the detriment of her Sunday toilet and the sofa-cover.

'You shouldn't have told her quite so suddenly,' said Deborah, somewhat ashamed of this emotional display. 'She has such a mind. The shock has been too much for her. She hasn't had such a fit of hysterics since father died.'

Priscilla recovered sufficiently to be led up the corkscrew staircase, and before departing cast a piteous look at the minister.

'I should be the last to fling a shadow on your happiness,' she said, 'but I thought you'd never marry again. I thought your mind was lifted above it; or that if you did, it would be some one of a suitable age, and with a mind fit to mate with yours. But the human heart is a mystery.'

And with a strangled sob Priscilla drooped her disordered head upon her sister's shoulder, and suffered herself to be assisted up the corkscrew staircase, an operation which occasioned some bumping of heads and rapping of elbows at awkward turns in the stair.

This was the beginning of evils that came out of Joshua Haggard's second marriage; an event in the life of man to which his kindred in particular and his friends in general are especially apt to take objection; and yet the responsibility of the act is all his, and the good or ill thereof is a cup which his lips alone can drink. Whether he chains himself to a fury who shall make his days and nights miserable, or wins to his side an angel who shall shed upon his pathway the sunshine of domestic bliss, and make his progress to the grave pleasant as a noontide ramble through a rose-garden, it is he who shall pay the penalty of a foolish choice or reap the reward of a wise one.

### THE ETON TRADITION

In a recently-published volume of great interest, now lying before me, the Poetical Works of Laman Blanchard, with a Memoir by Blanchard Jerrold, I find in the biographical notice a remark well worth weighing in itself, and peculiarly apposite to the subject on which I have a few observations to make here. Early in 1844 Blanchard contemplated, it seems, a book on the boyhood of eminent men-an idea which it is much to be regretted he never carried into execution, and which would have fared infinitely better at his hands than it eventually did under the auspices of Mr. Edgar —and addressed a letter to the late Lord Lytton, then Sir Edward Bulwer, asking for some hints and suggestions. In reply Bulwer sent him a series of admirably-fruitful notes, which Mr. Blanchard Jerrold has done well to include in his memoir. 'The contrast.' writes Bulwer, 'between the boyhood of Pitt and Fox is worth The one so thoroughly the lonely, the other the touching on. social boy; each embodying the vices and virtues of home education and public.' That the foundation of Fox's passion for gambling was laid before he left Eton there is no doubt; on the other hand, that process was by no means completed exclusively at Eton. during his holidays, and when a mere child, was allowed the same liberty, the same license, was introduced to the same scenes, as a man of the world. There was one thing for which Fox may be said to have been indebted to Eton, and to Eton alone. He thoroughly caught the literary inspiration of the place. If he plunged in its schoolboy excesses, he never failed to drink more or less deeply of its Pierian well; and unless Eton had satisfied the taste which she instilled, Fox would have been without what was the enduring solace of his lifetime, and his character would lack that halo of brightness and grace with which it is and will remain encircled. It is the preëminently distinguishing characteristic of Eton that she has always possessed the power of attaching to herself the affections of her true alumni through all the vicissitudes of their after-existence, with a constancy that has seldom varied, and with a fervour that almost amounts to passion. Fox was never free from the traditions of her influence; he never lost the enthusiasm of his boyhood.

The experiences of the Whig statesman might be further illustrated through a long succession of Eton worthies. Only one or two instances need here be taken. 'Eton,' writes Sir Edward

Creasy, in his Eminent Etonians-which is the most complete work of its kind, and a new edition of which Messrs. Chatto and Windus have done well to announce, just as Messrs. Williams's 'Eton Portrait Gallery' is in many respects the most conveniently compendious-' has never seen within her walls a more accomplished gentleman, in the best sense of the word, or a more judicious ruler, than she received in 1625, when Sir Henry Wotton became her provost.' In one of the prettiest bends of the Thames, about a quarter of a mile below the college, is or was an ancient eel-fishery, called Black Pots. Here Wotton and Walton, one of whose heroes Wotton was, used to fish and talk. 'Angling,' he (Wotton) would say, 'was an employment for his idle time, which was then not idly spent. for angling was, after a tedious study, a rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness.' And here it was, with all the associations which the place must have suggested full and fresh upon him, that Walton composed the panegyric upon his academic friend, that constitutes one of the most exquisite passages in his own delightful work. It would be impossible to find the sentiment of a deep and reverent affection for the alma mater of boyhood expressed in language more graceful or better chosen than Sir Henry employs. 'How useful,' he writes, 'was that advice of a holy monk, who persuaded his friend to perform his customary devotions in a constant place, because in that place we usually meet with those thoughts which possessed us at our last being there! And I find it experimentally true that, at my now being at that school, the seeing that very place where I sate when a boy occasioned me to remember those very thoughts of my youth which then possessed me-sweet thoughts, indeed, that promised my growing years numerous pleasures without mixture of cares, and those to be enjoyed when time (which I therefore thought slow-paced) had changed my vouth into manhood. . . . I saw there a succession of boys using the same recreations, and questionless possessed with the same thoughts. Thus one generation succeeds another, both in their lives, recreations, hopes, fears, and deaths.' A visit to Winchester was the cause of these remarks, but they very exactly interpret the feelings which sway the mind of many an old Etonian.

Coming to more recent times, the two alumni of Eton who have given the most eloquent expression to their love for the school are the Marquis of Wellesley and the Rev. John Moultrie, the latter of whom died little more than two years ago. Lord Wellesley may claim to rank as the most finished Latin scholar—using the expression as it was understood in the prescientific days, when scholarship meant an appreciation and mastery of the genius of the language, the faculty of reproducing both its spirit and its form, and not merely an acquaintance with derivations and roots—whom Eton has ever produced.

Mr. Disraeli, speaking of Eton boys, has said in Coningsby that at school friendship is a passion. The feeling of Lord Wellesley throughout his whole life for Eton merits no weaker name. He always dwelt upon its memories; he perpetuated in practice the accomplishments which he had learned there; thus giving another proof that devotion to the Muses of classical literature is not inconsistent with the most vigilant and earnest attention to the engrossing demands of statesmanship and administration. He lies buried in the college chapel, in accordance with his especial request, and the tablet above his tomb is inscribed with the Latin lines which he composed, and in which the last aspiration of his life is contained:

'Fortunæ rerumque vagis exercitus undis,
In gremium redeo serus, Etona, tuum :
Magna sequi, summæque minari culmina famæ,
Et purum antiquæ lucis adire jubar,
Auspice te didici puer, atque in limine vitæ
Ingenuas veræ laudis amare vias.
Si qua meum votæ decursa gloria nomen
Auxerit, aut si quis nobilitarit honos,
Muneris, Alma, tui est; altrix da terra sepulchrum,
Supremam lachrymam da, memoremque mei.'

Six weeping willows, which stand in different parts of the Playing-fields, were planted as memorials of the illustrious author of these lines—the thought and diction of which alike defy criticism—and in full command of a view that he particularly admired there has been erected a bench. With what Wellesley has written in Latin there may be compared a stanza from a very beautiful and pathetic poem by John Moultrie in English—Moultrie, the collaborateur of Praed in the Etonian—of whose poem, Godiva, when read aloud to him by George Hardinge, Gifford, editor of the Quarterly Review, remarked: 'If that young Moultrie writes prose as well as he writes poetry, I shall be glad to hear from him.'

'There is no feature in her fair domain
Which of decay or change displays a trace,
No charm of hers but doth undimn'd remain.
Eton! my boyhood's blest abiding place,
The old expression lingers on thy face;
The spirit of past days unquench'd is there,
While all things else are changed and changing everywhere!

Before the question is asked and answered, What are the elements of which 'the Eton tradition' is composed, and how has this tradition in time past been maintained? it will not be amiss to make a few remarks on the history of the school, deriving our materials from the various volumes which have been lately published on the subject, and of which Mr. Maxwell Lyte's work is perhaps the most convenient and complete. As for its founder, 'pious Henry' VI., what need is there to speak of him? The more important fact to note

is that 'the King's College of our Lady of Eton, beside Wyndsor,' to which the royal charter was granted in 1441, does not possess the antiquity which is sometimes claimed for it, and must, both as regards age and originality, yield the palm to Winchester. regards the management of the college-buildings and the school curriculum, Eton was very much a copy of Winchester. head-master of Eton, William of Waynflete, was an importation from Winchester. With him came five fellows, four clerks, thirtyfive scholars, whose qualifications are, according to the statute, verbally identical with those of Winchester. A solemn instrument of alliance, the 'Amicabilis Concordia,' was employed the year after the foundation of Eton, for the purpose of uniting it in the bonds of an everlasting alliance with Winchester. The two societies, it is set forth in this document, were to be one in spirit and intent, though divided in locality,' and were to be pledged for ever to a mutua et perpetua caritas. When the triumph of the house of York over Lancaster was complete, the very existence of Eton was imperilled. Edward attempted to merge the school in the College of St. George at Windsor, and obtained a bull to that effect from Pius II. Provost Westbury, however, who won from his patriotic policy the name of the Camillus of Eton, offered a resistance so determined that the bull was annulled. When the wars between the White and Red Roses were at an end. Eton received an access of prosperity and prestige. Hitherto her educational apparatus and domestic accommodation were only calculated for the seventy founda-Somewhere about 1465 'sons of the nobility and tion scholars. of powerful persons, special friends and benefactors to the college,' were admitted up to the number of twenty. These oppidan scholars, some of whom resided within and others outside the precincts of the college, were, as at Winchester, divided into two classes generosarum filii commensales and simple commensales; the former the equivalent of the 'gentlemen commoners,' the latter of the 'commoners' at Oxford. The first of these oppidans of whom anvthing is known is William Paston, and the Paston letters contain an epistle addressed by him to his eldest brother, which mutatis mutandis is very much the same style of composition that an Eton boy might address to his brother now: that is to say, he thanks him for a 'tip' and a present in fruit, and rebuts a charge of extravagance which seems to have been brought against him. He confesses, however, to having done what Eton boys are too cynical and prematurely blasés to do now: he has fallen in love, and he meditates matrimony. The matter-of-fact way in which the lad speaks of the object of his affections is very curious. The name of the young lady is Margaret Alborow; 'the age of her is by all likelihood eighteen or nineteen years at the farthest; and as for the money and plate, it is ready whenever she were wedded; but as for the livelihood I trow

not till after the mother's decease: but I cannot tell you for very certain, but you may know by inquiry. But as for her beauty, judge you that when you see her. If so be that you take the labour, especially behold her hands; for an if it be as it is told me, she is disposed to be thick.'

It was not till the school had been in existence nearly a century that Eton acquired a national reputation, under the head-mastership of Richard Coxe. Coxe, who was subsequently deacon of Christ Church, and who somewhat scandalised the members of that illustrious society by being the first head of it who brought a wife to live within its walls, educated more than one boy who afterwards became famous; notably Haddon, master in succession of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and Magdalen College, Oxford, and the chief champion of classical scholarship at its revival in England. Coxe was followed by the energetic and better-known Nicholas Udall, said by Haddon to be 'the best schoolmaster and the greatest beater of our day.' Thomas Tusser, also his pupil, has recorded much the same opinion of him in some familiar lines. But Dr. Udall came, in the words of the old chronicle, 'near to losing his place,' and according to another account absolutely lost it, on a charge of complicity with two of his scholars in stealing the college plate.

The daily regimen of Eton boys at this time was the same as at Winchester, and was marked by a severe simplicity that forms an emphatic contrast to the life led by the Etonian at the present day. They rose at five; said their prayers in Latin, and antiphonally, while dressing; made their own beds and swept their own rooms. At six the under-master came into school, read prayers, and the day's work began; work lasted with no interruption to nine. such meal as breakfast seems to have been known. Prayers were again read at ten, and at eleven came dinner. From twelve to three came school again; school once more from four to five, and supper between six and seven. At eight the scholars were marched off to bed. The allowance of play to work in the programme was, it will be perceived, altogether disproportionate; and according to the old account the Eton scholars of the sixteenth century ought to have been very dull boys indeed. 'Bounds' were very strictly Only on the 1st of May, if the weather was fine—there was a special warning not to wet their feet-Mr. Lucas Collins tells us that the boys were allowed to go to the woods and gather the green boughs to deck their chambers. On the great festivals of the Church they were allowed the privilege of a country walk; any deviation into a wayside tavern or beer-shop being formally prohibited, and in practice probably being as common as the lounge at the Tap or the Christopher is with the Eton boy of to-day. At Christmas there were theatricals; and in 1507 Cardinal Wolsey was present at the performance of the tragedy of Dido, com-

posed by Ritwise, master of St. Paul's School. Eton theatricals have survived the Eton Montem; and the drama at Eton continued, as it continues now, to be cultivated long after the Long Chamber performances were suppressed. Mr. Lucas Collins, in his very interesting volume, gives us the most complete account in existence of the Eton drama. Somewhere about 1820 an Eton theatre, he tells us, was started by Germain Lavis and Howard, the late Lord Carlisle, in a boat-loft belonging to Hester. wards a far better establishment was formed in Datchet-lane, Windsor, where a large warehouse was hired of Mason, the coal-merchant, and in the management of which Moultrie conducted the affairs on behalf of the colleges, and Crawford represented the oppidan interests.' 'I look back,' says one who, according to Mr. Collins, was pars magna of these proceedings, with wondrous pleasure to the exhibitions of those days; we certainly had some prodigiously fine actors, but there is one who is indelibly impressed upon my memory -St. Vincent Bowen: his Sir Peter Teazle, Oakley, Bob Acres, Old Rapid, Lord Duberley, Sir Robert Bramble, and Old Philpotts were marvellous performances. I have seen much professional acting, and have paid much attention to it; but after a lapse of forty-five years I can recall every look and gesture of this great actor before whom we all quailed, and I can safely say that I never saw his equal. Moultrie, Hare, Maclean, Bullock, Crawford, Wilder, Buxton, were the other chief performers. Never were colleger and oppidan feuds more completely quashed; never were nearer and dearer boyish friendships formed; never was there less of mischief and profligacy in the school. The masters knew this well, and winked at the contraband proceeding; but unluckily our success tended to vanity, and vanity to ruin. . . . In my unlimited admiration for that great actor, Bowen, I must not lose sight of some of his successors. Moultrie in domestic pathos was unrivalled: it was a strange sight to see tears on the cheeks of some dare-devil upper-division boy-some stalwart stroke of the ten-oar or captain of the eleven—as they contemplated his Job Thornberry; while in broad farce — Ratcatcher, Quaker, Corporal, or Jew — his quaint humour was equally popular. A passion for the stage has always been part of the Etonian tradition. Soon after Waterloo the news spread among the Etonians then resident in Paris that Dr. Keate had been seen eating an ice at Tortoni's. His former pupils subscribed to give him a dinner. After dinner,--" his appreciation of which," writes Captain Gronow, "the Doctor evinced in a most gratifying manner,—we told him how two of the masters, Drury and Knapp, contrived without his knowing it to go up to London every Saturday to dine with Arnold and Kean at Drury Lane." On one occasion, it seems, "these jovial pedagogues," as Gronow calls them, dined with the great tragedian at the old Hummums, not wisely

but too well. They then "sallied out in search of adventures, and after several chivalrous encounters with the watchmen they were taken to Bow-street, and had to be bailed out of durance by the secretary of the all-powerful Chancellor, who had been apprised of their mishap. This incident created much scandal. The two tutors were threatened with the loss of their places and clerical degradation; but Lord Eldon, who was no enemy to a bottle of port, threw over them the mantle of his protection, and they got off without incurring the punishment they so richly deserved."

The active pursuits of literature and politics have as honourably distinguished Eton as the dramatic exploits of her alumni. Microcosm began the series of Eton magazines, edited by Canning, whose writings in it first brought him under the notice of Fox, and contributed to mainly by Bobus Smith, Hookham Frere, Henry Spencer, and Joseph Melluish. The Microcosm was followed at an interval of sixteen years by the Miniature, edited by Canning's cousin, then a keen scholar at Eton, Stratford Canning, and now Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Later came the Saltbearer and the College Magazine. In 1821 the Etonian was started—incomparably the best of the whole number—and with which the names of Winthrop Mackworth Praed, William Sydney Walker, and John Moultrie will ever be associated. The Eton Miscellany originated with Mr. Gladstone and his contemporaries. Since then there have been the Oppidan, the Bureau, the Porticus Etonensis, the Observer, and the Phænix. The only specimen of Eton journalism now in existence is the Eton College Chronicle, which is merely a school newspaper, containing a record of current school events. designed, amongst other things, as an especial boon to parents, and to supply the place of letters, which often, from press of circumstances and time, boys omit to write.' The Eton Society, usually known as Pop-so called from the fact that it was originally held over a cook-shop, popina—was established in 1811, by Charles Fox Townshend, as a reading and debating society, and has been eminently successful. Membership of it is a coveted distinction, and the list of members is limited to thirty.

If Eton was modelled on Winchester, and if between Winchester and Eton there existed that mutua caritas of whose formal declaration I have already spoken, the historic rival of Eton has been Westminster. The school which has been the nursing mother of statesmen has from time immemorial provoked the jealousy of the school whose peculiar boast it is to have given England some of her greatest theologians. 'So Westminster triumphed over Eton,' says Nichols, after having told the well-known story of Pulteney's correction of Walpole's Horatian misquotation, Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ; and Mr. Lucas Collins has not failed to notice the manner in which the spirit of rivalry between the two

institutions asserts itself in the writings of Eton and Westminster Thus George Hardinge expresses his satisfaction, writing when he was then of mature age, that during the eleven years of Dr. Barnard's rule at Eton, 'The rival school, though an excellent one, and more likely, as in the metropolis, to obtain privilege, was stationary in its numbers and its fame.' Barnard himself, whose eyes were keenly fixed on the mitre, admitted that his disappointment was intensified by the promotion of Markham, head-master of Westminster. Richard Cumberland, an old Westminster, evidently shows his patriotic jealousy when he says, 'the vicinity of Windsor Castle is of no benefit to the discipline and good order of Eton school.' It is probable that this sentiment of emulation, which occasionally went as far as bitterness, was fostered by the Eton and Westminster Boatrace-a rite which, though it existed as late as 1860, has now apparently become obsolete. The first three races were rowed in 1829, 1881, and 1886 respectively, Eton being victor in each. In 1837 Westminster triumphed, and that in Eton's own water, at Datchet. King William IV., who was present, protested that Eton lost because Dr. Hawtrey was a spectator. A ninth contest took place at Putney in 1847, when Eton won, thus winning five events out of nine. The race was last rowed in 1860, and once more the laurels were Eton's. Eton and Westminster, like Eton and Rugby, now only meet at Henley; and an invitation is always issued by the Eton boys to their Westminster rivals to take a place in the procession of boats on the 4th of June. time-honoured custom of sitting a boat,' writes Mr. Maxwell Lyte, Some old Etonian, of generous and festive dis-'claims mention. position (usually an old "oar"), signifies to the captain of a boat his intention of presenting the crew with a certain quantity of champagne. In return he is entitled to be rowed up to Surly in the boat to which he presents the wine; he occupies the coxswain's seat, who kneels or stands behind him. This giver of good things is called, from this circumstance, a "sitter;" and the question, "Who sits your boat?" or "Have you a sitter?" is one of some interest which may often be heard addressed to a captain. honour in the ten-oar is usually offered to some distinguished old Mr. Canning occupied it in 1824.' Etonian.

The very best description of Eton life, or indeed of life at any school ever written, is that given by Mr. Disraeli in Coningsby. The Prime Minister acquired the materials for it in the course of a two or three days' stay at Eton in the house of Mr. Cookesley; and with the single exception that the definite article is prefixed to Brocas, there is nothing in it which could indicate that its author was not an Etonian himself. Very happily indeed has Mr. Disraeli caught the air of generous liberality which is in a sense peculiar to Eton; for Eton differs from all other public schools in virtue of the

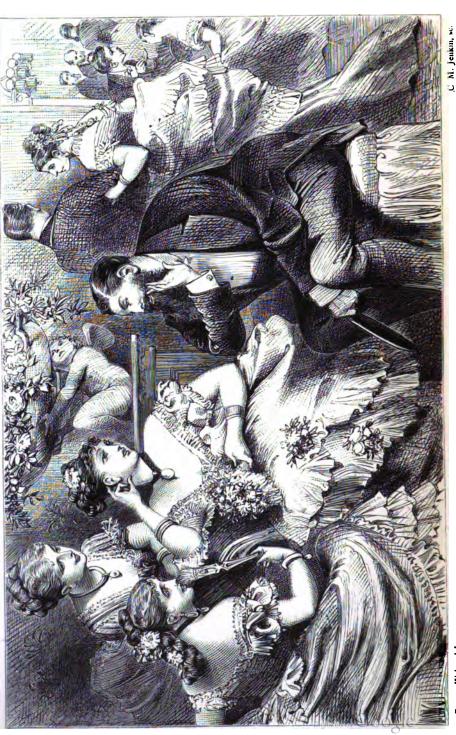
fact that the authority of the sixth form has never been as complete there and the system of fagging never as rigid and as general as at Winchester, at Rugby, and at Harrow. 'It is not,' said one of the witnesses before the Public School Commission of 1864, 'thought the thing for a sixth-form oppidan to lick a boy.' It may indeed be questioned whether enough of confidence and authority is vested in the sixth form, and whether it would not be well that some of the powers which the master delegates to the celebrities of the river or the playing-fields should not be given to sixth-form boys because they are sixth-form boys. 'In college' there is more of fagging than amongst the oppidans, though even here it is leniency itself when compared with the régime of a bygone day. The Eton collegers owe a debt of extreme gratitude to Dr. Hawtrey. He it was who inaugurated those reforms in their condition which had so long been denied, and who restored to them the privileges and rights which they were entitled under the magnificent foundation of Eton to claim. Up to 1844 the state of Long Chamber was a scandal to 'At eight o'clock,' to utilise Mr. Collins's narrative, 'every evening the doors of the lower-school passage were locked; and from that time until seven in the morning, or half-past in the winter, when they were unlocked again for school, the collegers were left entirely to themselves; for the masters, who originally slept in the same building, had long removed into their private houses; and it is only of late years that a special assistant-master has been appointed to live in college and exercise some sort of domestic superintendence over the boys. It may be imagined that Long Chamber became the scene of considerable irregularities. The sixth form did just as they pleased; and if any among them were vicious or tyrannical the life of a junior was sometimes very miserable indeed. A good deal of his time out of school passed in the combined occupations of valet, cook, housemaid, and shoeblack to his master: but that was endurable enough if, like those functionaries in the outer world, he was allowed to have his meals and his sleep in peace—a blessing by no means secure to him. He might have to sit up half the night to arrange and attend upon a late sixthform supper (frequently including the concoction of a bowl of punch); or if he had the luck to get into his bed (where he found scant bedclothes and no pillow) in tolerably good time, he had a good chance of being awoke by the sudden tilting of his bedstead, and finding himself half smothered, heels upwards, in the darkness. Many of the scenes which Long Chamber saw during successive generations of occupants it may be well to bury in oblivion. . . . But Long Chamber, with all its traditions, is now a thing of the past. It was totally altered in 1844; the scholars now have each their separate room, where they sleep and study, except a few of the juniors, who occupy a small dormitory partitioned off into cubicals. The invariable

mutton has given place to roast beef two days in the week; the head-master or his deputy dines in hall, and the breakfast and tea are as comfortably arranged as in the oppidan boarding-houses.'

It is to be hoped that the change which has recently come over the spirit of Eton, and the apparent replacement of the true historic Etonian tradition by one infinitely less noble, may not change for the worse the relations between oppidans and collegers. now suffering from its plethora of success and prestige, and there is a serious danger lest the tone of the school should be permanently The curse of Eton is its extravagance; and this extravagance is the consequent of the persistent inducements offered to Eton boys by parents and masters alike to spend money. Twenty vears ago an Eton sixth-form oppidan who returned to school with a five-pound note in his pocket thought himself, and was thought by others, a fortunate being. Now Eton oppidans, who are not in the sixth form and who have neither chance nor ambition of getting there, bring back at the beginning of the term not five pounds, but fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty pounds. In one way it may be said that this change is but proof of the nationality of Eton. has sprung up in the last half-century a new aristocracy—the aristocracy of wealth. That aristocracy indeed has nothing but its wealth to entitle it to preëminence. It is not so long ago that Eton boys were composed exclusively of the sons of noblemen, country squires, clergymen, and a few of the better class of lay professional The Etonian who was sent to school merely that he might make a parade of the wealth of his father-might, in fact, serve as an advertisement of the enormous parental balance at the bankers'—and make acquaintances, was unknown. But it is now such lads as these, the sons of parvenus and nouveaux riches, who, in a very considerable degree, give their tone to the school, and whose presence, with the perilous example which it constitutes, prevents many parents from sending their sons thither. Of course it may be said that is only one of the manifestations of the spirit of the age-only one illustration of the baleful results of the despotism of wealth. it would be well worth the while of those who are responsible for the fate of Eton to see whether the unwelcome phenomenon cannot at least be modified instead of stimulated; and unless this is done there is some risk lest the true tradition of Eton-such as it has been handed down for four centuries—such as it was exemplified by the great statesmen, scholars, wits, and soldiers whom it has given to the world—such as it is to be found in the annals of Eton pastimes not less than of Eton studies—such as it suggests itself in the playing-fields, on the river, in the school-yard, and in the school-chapel-should be hopelessly lost.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.





George Kirby, del.

# A QUIET BIT OF SCANDAL

When cannibal savages after a fight

Make a feast of the bodies of those they have beaten,
The grisly repast yields a keener delight
From the knowledge that every unfortunate wight
Would have deem'd it the deepest disgrace to be eaten.

Though the custom is fast dying out in Fiji,
As the influence of Western example increases,
In civilised countries you often may see
A circle of friends, in the highest of glee,
All busily picking some neighbour to pieces.

And the best of it is that the neighbour is not,
As in islands barbaric, a person deceased;
His flesh has been baked in no caldron or pot;
They don't even trouble to serve him up hot;
For the victim still lives in the midst of the feast.

Some good-natured friend, p'r'aps, may make him aware
Of the nature of these hungry monsters' employment;
And though in reply he may stoutly declare
That such vivisection won't hurt him a hair,
Yet he writhes at the thought of their fiendish enjoyment.

Still one comfort remains. In the isles of Fiji

No possible vengeance is left for the victim;

He is cook'd and defunct. But in Europe he's free;

To seek satisfaction; and sometimes we see

That he wounds in exchange for the wounds which have prick'd him.

Then beware, Mrs. Smith; beware, lovely Miss Brown; Young Jones, whisper nothing that isn't quite true; Be a little more careful of others' renown, For Thompson in yonder recess has sat down With Miss Green, and is quietly cutting up you!

ARTHUR LOOKER.

### LORD CHANCELLOR CAIRNS

HAVING strolled one morning lately into the Court of Chancery, a good opportunity was afforded me of observing an eminent personage with whom I had been acquainted more than thirty years ago at Trinity College, Dublin. Seated in the marble chair and arrayed in his robes of office, Lord Cairns looks undoubtedly a man of presence. The pale cast of thought is diffused over his features, and the deep lines engraven there are the manifest result of many a midnight vigil and hour of toilsome thought. He seemed to me, however, wonderfully little altered since I had seen him last in the examination-hall of old Trinity; and as I looked the past rose slowly before me, and with it a recollection of the eager, bright-eyed, hungry-looking fellow-commoner whose name was always in the honour list. hunger of Mr. Hugh MacCalmont Cairns was insatiable, but it was after knowledge only—the knowledge that gives power—and he never knew, as another illustrious countryman, the Right Hon. John Philpott Curran, it is said, not unfrequently did, what it was to want Born in easy if not affluent circumstances, Mr. Cairns had none of those early struggles to encounter by which, according to her Majesty's present Prime Minister, men can only become great. He enjoyed every educational advantage, both in his early life and in his subsequent training for the Bar, which ample means could command. And although there is nothing great, we are told, without labour, Mr. Cairns contrived to achieve eminence insensibly, as it were, and without much apparent or painful effort. It is true we see the result only. Who can tell the patient drudgery, the long, up-hill, continuous wear and tear of thought, nights of study and days devoid of ease, which brought him to his present splendid position?

'Who can tell how hard it is to climb

The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?

Who knows how many a soul sublime

Hath felt the influence of malignant star,

Or waged with Fortune an unequal war?'

In those delightful volumes, the Lives of the Chancellors, Lord Campbell has eloquently described the progress and eventual rise of many gifted men to that eminence which he himself only attained towards the close of a long and laborious life. He has displayed a wonderful amount of research in minutely tracing the causes which led to their success. But here, I thought, is now before me a man

with the leading incidents of whose career we are all familiar, who has risen to his present high estate by no unworthy arts or political manœuvres, whose whole career has been one rapid and continuous success, outshining in brilliancy by far that of any of his famous predecessors of whom Lord Campbell has written. He has risen to his present position per saltum—at a bound—without any lynxeyed observant critic to search out and record the means. I apprehend they are not far to seek, and without any deep research we may arrive at the conclusion that a mind of fine muscular intelligence in a frame of vigorous energy applying itself resolutely to the acquisition of the subtleties of that enormous legend we call Law, backed by extreme good luck and undeviating fidelity to a great political party, has made an unknown Irishman, without any family connections, a peer of the realm and Lord Chancellor of England. Voilà Of the Milesian temperament, with its impulsiveness, fire, and genius, Lord Cairns shows no trace. The native of Ulster is shrewd, resolute, sagacious, and far-seeing; when an intellect of this kind is applied to trade, he generally becomes a rich, prosperous, and influential member of the community. I have seen thousands of men of this kind rise in Ulster rapidly to fortune. qualities of mind, applied to law, Lord Cairns has made himself what he is. The peerage is an honour to Lord Cairns undoubtedly. but such a man, I consider, is an honour to the peerage:

'Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.'

I have spent many a summer's morning in wandering through the woods of Cultra, an ancient family seat of the Kennedys, in the county of Down. There the future Lord Chancellor of England was born. I have often wondered whether, in the fresh green glades of that charming wooded retreat, any prescience ever dawned upon the boy's mind of the brilliant destiny which the future had in store for him. He probably prowled about, getting curious shells by the seashore, and making small mounds of sand with a wooden spade, after the manner of other urchins. His father, I have heard, died while yet young; and I believe the boy's education was conducted under the careful supervision of his mother, to whom every credit is due. I cannot tell whether that good lady survived to see even a glimmer of her son's future splendour; probably not. And neither she, nor the nursemaids who took him out for his morning walks, nor the provincial artist who fashioned his first pair of-well, must I say pantaloons?—probably had the most remote idea that they were tending and fondling and breeching the future Lord Chancellor. What proud people they would all have been if such an idea had ever crossed their minds! Well, there was no lady in all that land, as it turned out, had a greater son. They have all passed away now into the land of shadows; but as I looked at the Lord Chancellor

of England in his full-bottomed wig, with the mace before himwhich so many a feverish hand has tried in vain to clutch—and the Bar of England hanging on his words, I wondered if the pleasant wooded haunts of his boyish years ever recurred to his memory, or the thoughts of the good people who took care of him. they did, or he would not be so great a man as he is. I make no pretensions to be a physiognomist, but as I looked into the Lord Chancellor's face I thought I could discern a very marked distinction hetween its expression and that of the other eminent person whom I had so recently seen presiding in the same court. There is a subdued, chastened, and quiet sense of refined power apparent in the aspect of Lord Selborne, which seemed to me wanting in that of his successor. There is abundant evidence of power about the present Lord Chancellor, but it seemed to me of quite another kindbroader, less subtle, and more vigorous. The tones of his voice too are sonorous and manly, without any of those dulcet intonations which characterise the melodious atterances of Lord Selborne; but his eye is quick, active, searching, and full of lustrous intelligence. Being the first day of term, the court was crowded to see the new chancellor; but as his glance fell upon the present writer, who was packed in the throng, I thought I perceived a flicker of recognition pass across it, although many years had passed since we met. The case which was occupying the attention of the court during my brief visit was not one of the slightest public importance: it was only an appeal from the decision of some court of inferior jurisdiction which had reversed an order in bankruptcy; and when the Lord Chancellor, in clear and vigorous tones, gave his reasons for dismissing the motion with costs, I had little difficulty in understanding how it was he had achieved in the House of Commons so great a reputation as a debater. His mind appeared to pounce, as it were, upon the subject before it with a grasp which was perfectly comprehensive. Its component parts were analysed with subtlety. The Chancellor then seemed to draw from a storehouse of professional knowledge a legal principle to fit into the facts, and he then drew a perfectly lucid and perspicuous conclusion. It is a curious fact. but this judgment—the first he had delivered since his present accession to power-I was informed by a bystander, reversed, in effect, a decision of his former master, Sir Richard Malins.

It was in the chambers of Sir Richard—then an equity draughts—man and conveyancer—that Lord Cairns received his legal education. It may not be known to all my readers that in former days it was only necessary to keep a certain number of terms—that is to say, to eat a certain number of dinners in some particular Inn of Court—in order to qualify any gentleman to become a practising barrister. No attendance upon lectures was required, nor was any preliminary examination necessary. But if the student wished to qualify him-

self for future employment by acquiring a thorough knowledge of his profession, then it was usual for him to go for a few years into the chambers of some practitioner whose business was tolerably extensive. By payment of the small sum of one hundred guineas down any student may browse at will in those delightful legal pastures. see every case which comes into his master's chambers, read all his law-books, and gather the experience which has taken a long life of labour to amass; or he may be as idle as he pleases, reading nothing but the daily papers or the last new novel. I have been told that when Mr. Cairns was a pupil he displayed an amount of energetic industry which, in one so young, was quite extraordinary. He came early, remained late, and devoured the contents of every paper which came under his notice, with a legal appetite which was perfectly voracious. The result of this intellectual training was that he became, at an early age, quite a great lawyer; and commencing to practise in the court where Mr. Malins was then the leader, the pupil gradually absorbed the business of his former master, and the teacher enjoyed the melancholy satisfaction of perceiving that he had trained a young intellectual athlete, who was destined to compete with him for the honours, and eventually to beat him in the battle of life. At quite an early period in his professional career Mr. Cairns received 'silk,' and soon afterwards had the honour of contesting and winning the representation of his native town, Belfast, in Parliament. His future success thus became assured. In common with all his countrymen, the Lord Chancellor is a strong politician; his proclivities are Conservative, and to that cause he attached himself with enthusiastic ardour. He became Solicitor-General about the year 1858, on Lord Derby's second advent to power, the present Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer being then Mr. Attorney. On Lord Derby's third accession to power Mr. Cairns became Attorney-General. In the same year he was made judge of the Court of Appeal in Chancery, with a peerage; and in a couple of years afterwards, on Lord Chelmsford's retirement, he became Lord Chancellor of England. Such, en bref, is the extraordinary career of this child of fortune, resembling more the romantic incidents of some fairy tale than a dry record of the ordinary details of human life. career of Lord Cairns affords, I think, a remarkable illustration of the fallacy of the Home Rulers' argument in favour of an independent legislature. If a native parliament had been assembled in the old Senate-house at College Green, it is extremely probable that the ambition of the most aspiring Irishman would have been satisfied with presiding there. He probably would never have crossed St. George's Channel, and the nobler field of ambition, with the more splendid prizes offered by the English Bar, would not have entered into the imagination of an Irishman. In his own country, from the position of his family and the influence of its connections, the success

of Mr. Cairns would have been comparatively easy and almost certain; but, like Brougham, he chose to leave behind him those early associations and to try his fortune upon a wider field. The result is now before us.

During his career as a law officer in the House of Commons the influence of Sir Hugh Cairns on the debates was marked and striking, although he has since been accused of a tendency to infuse into political questions the rules by which courts of equity are regu-He vet evinced more statesmanlike qualities than any other lawyer of equal note has ever displayed in the House of Commons when he was on the Treasury bench. The present Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, and the late Lord Lytton were his associates in office; and in point of readiness and brilliancy as a debater Sir Hugh Cairns was not far behind them. Upon all matters connected with his own profession his authority was indisputable; and when at his intervention the late Ministry were compelled to abandon their Judicature Bill, it was whispered that Lord Cairns aspired to a sort of political dictatorship, and, not contented with having clutched the great seal, sought to grasp a prize still more splendid. I believed, however, at the time—and his conduct has since gone far to prove it—that the opposition then offered to the measure by Lord Cairns did not so much proceed from any objection to a moderate measure of law reform as from an honest desire to preserve intact the privileges of the House of Lords, which he considered in danger.

I have endeavoured, I fear very inadequately, to present the readers of Belgravia with a sketch of one of the most extraordinarily gifted men now living. There have been lawyers in this country perhaps as erudite, but none who attained professional eminence at so early an age and apparently with so little effort; while as a statesman and political adviser of the great national party the influence of Lord Cairns is, I believe, without a parallel. When the life of Lord Cairns comes to be added to the long list of his distinguished predecessors, I cannot hope to have here afforded the future biographer many facts which will be of much practical value. As every incident, however trifling, which can throw any light upon the character of a personage so remarkable is of value, I cannot conclude without mentioning one which at least attests the amiability of his disposition. Many years ago I was a member of the north-east circuit, which traverses the province of Ulster, and I thus became acquainted with the provincial capital of Belfast. discovered in that town a very famous pastrycook, justly celebrated for the manufacture of superior raspberry-tarts. These delicacies I . was providentially the means of introducing at the Bar mess, which highly approved of my tarts, and patronised Mrs. Linden with a liberality which was quite surprising. Not long ago, having occa-

sion to go to the North of Ireland, I paid a visit to my old friend, whom I found grown uncommonly stout, and, I was glad to learn, very wealthy. Speaking to her of old times, I observed upon the counter a bridal cake of stupendous dimensions, glittering all over with gorgeous decorations. The cake was for a royal bride—one of the princesses—Mrs. Linden proudly informed me; and she was going to take the delicacy herself to Windsor.

'And pray,' I inquired, 'how did you become a recipient of the orders of royalty? Have the London confectioners lost their cun-

ning?'

'It was Sir Hugh Cairns got me the order,' Mrs. Linden replied. 'He used to come in here often, and eat raspberry-tarts

just as you did, when he was a boy, and got to like them.'

In the course of the same evening I dined with the vicer of the parish and told the story, which I rendered much to the Lord Chancellor's credit. His reverence, I remember, was highly delighted. He had always, he said, considered young Cairns as of quite too studious a turn of mind to have any taste for such frivolities. must confess when I saw this great personage on the first day of term presiding in the Court of Chancery, which was crowded upon the occasion, and the Queen's counsel, whom he had entertained at breakfast that morning, bowing before him in their silken robes and full-bottomed wigs, my thoughts flew back to the pleasant associations of Trinity College; and I remembered too the little dingy back shop in Bridge-street, Belfast, where the youth who was destined to become Lord Chancellor of England indulged his innocent boyish proclivities. I wondered if he could eat a raspberry-tart with the same zest now as he did then; or if the many banquets at which he has presided in solemn official dignity, and the vast stores of legal learning he has accumulated, would cause such trifles to pall upon the great man's taste. P. B.

## BY AND BY

# BY MARY CECIL HAY, AUTHOR OF 'OLD MYDDELTON'S MONEY,' 'THE SQUIRE'S LEGACY,' ETC.

WE are—I think it as well to state the fact distinctly at once—we are the most distinguished family in—well, let us be moderate, and only say in England. But, unfortunately, I must add that we are not yet sufficiently appreciated.

'Talent is never fully estimated in the provinces, my dears,' sighs mamma. 'The Stafford people hardly know what it means; and they admire any tradesman who will give a good dinner quite

as much as my gifted sons with their brilliant talent.'

And I think she is right; though sometimes I think too—I am very practical, and always think practical thoughts—that the provincial public may have its excuse for this tardiness of appreciation.

'It would have been different,' adds mamma plaintively, 'if we had not been connected with that distressing Brewery, which still bears the name of your poor dear unfortunate papa.'

'Why unfortunate, when he left us all so comfortably off?'

This query is not noticed because it is mine, and I take too decidedly after poor dear unfortunate papa to be much thought of.

'I tremble in every limb,' mamma continues, looking round for sympathy from all her gifted family (except me), 'whenever I read that John Pilkington on the Brewery gates. While your poor dear papa lived, I bore it as well as he could expect; but if I had known he could consent to bequeath his name to the Brewery, I should have entreated him not to bequeath the name also to me, and to my intellectual and sensitive—' Tears stifle the conclusion of this regret.

I nod consolingly: 'Never mind, mother. When we live in London I daresay we shall find people who have not even heard

of the Brewery.'

But my soothing remarks are little heeded, because I am so exactly like poor dear papa in having no soul.

- 'Not but what your papa was a very good man, my dears, and remarkably fond of me. It was his misfortune—I never did say it was his fault—to be born without genius.'
  - 'Perhaps he found it quite as comfortable,' I venture.

'Poor child!'

It would be impossible to portray by written words either the intense pity or the conscious superiority expressed in those two monosyllables. Naturally they increase my envy of my talented brothers

and sisters; but perhaps there are quite enough of them, without me, to win celebrity for the Pilkington family, when mother's prophecy comes true.

By and by, my dears, your genius will be widely acknowledged,

and the world of art will own your rich endowments.'

By and by! That is the exact time we are waiting for, all of us; and perhaps it would be as well to explain how many we are, because we always seem so many more than we count.

When our parents found themselves possessed of a first-born, for whom it was necessary to choose a name, they made a simultaneous discovery that their wishes were widely at variance on the subject. There was a contest of many days' (and nights') duration, and from this contest both came forth victorious. They had entered into an amicable arrangement to this effect: each one of their children was to receive two names, one being the choice of either parent, and the parents were alternately to take the lead. Of course mamma took it first in right of her sex; but poor dear papa could not resist putting in a proposal in the flush of his paternal pride.

'You'll call him John, of course, my dear. He's born a

brewer.'

'He is born to adorn the world of art,' corrected mamma. 'The bumps of Time and Tune are developed on his little head exactly as they are on those of our great musicians. My boy must be Mendelssohn; but I do not object, for your sake, John, to abandon the Bartholdy.'

Poor dear papa said he 'should think so,' or something irrelevant to that effect, and mildly placed his own name in the rear. So our eldest brother was baptised Mendelssohn John; and though I never think it sounds very well before Pilkington, I wouldn't for the world express that idea much oftener than I do.

In their next child mamma discerned the promise of amazing beauty, and chose Hebe as a suitable name for her, skilfully ignoring their old agreement, in the hope that papa might have forgotten it. But poor dear papa had not, and triumphantly led the van with his practical Bridget.

'Old-fashioned notion,' mamma called his; but I don't know whether, after all, her notion was not the older of the two.

In due course appeared another son of the house of Pilkington; and in him, at the age of seven days, the artistic element was so plainly developed to the mother's far-seeing eye, that she proudly led his cognomen with Raphael, poor dear papa capping it up prosaically, as usual, and having him registered Raphael Benjamin.

Greatly did papa rejoice over the advent of a second daughter.

'We'll have a Mary,' he exclaimed, revelling in the thought that his name led this time. 'It is a good household name, and never out of place anywhere. We'll have a Mary.'

So they had, of course; but mamma utilised his choice in a diplomatic manner, which displayed her superiority. Detecting early symptoms of a bump which had something to do with imagination (I think, privately, that most bumps have a good deal to do with it), she made her choice; and if my sister is not some day celebrated as Mary Wortley it won't be her mother's fault. I never can bring myself to consider that Pilkington sounds quite so well after those names as Montague; but, after all, that sort of thing is a matter of taste.

Then I was born, and unfortunately exhibited no more signs of genius at that early age than I do now; so poor dear papa's choice of Susan was borne pretty well. But just at the last moment, though in time for my life-long discomfiture, mamma discovered that there had once been a Mrs. Belinda Susan Pilkington, immortalised in a pocket volume of female—very female—biography, chiefly, as far as I can discover, in consequence of having, 'in the early part of her life, derived little satisfaction from childish amusements, and, as she advanced in years, made the study of anatomy the favourite pursuit with which to occupy a remarkably inquiring mind.'

I am not proud of my name. One initial is as near as I ever venture to it in writing, and I think I should sink if I ever had to repeat the marriage-service in public. In pious hatred do I hold Miss Belinda Susan Pilkington of the inquiring mind, and I rejoice to learn from the pocket volume 'that it did, in her late years, acquire a tendency to gloom.'

That is how our names were chosen; but I believe it was observable from the first that poor dear pape's names, whether they came first or second, were soon put away and forgotten.

We are not a very large family, yet I must confess that we give that impression, as we lounge about the rooms at home in a stately, absent, large sort of manner, which (naturally) obtains much with those Pilkingtons who properly uphold the name, and are forbearingly conscious of having to waste an immense amount of sweetness on the dense provincial air; for—I confessed it to begin with, and have partially recovered from the effort now—the rich endowments which were born with us—I say us, because what's the use of belonging to a distinguished family unless one may appropriate the honour?—have not yet led us out upon the golden heights and unfading pestures where genius ever flourishes.

But they will by and by; and Stafford will then, of course, as mamma says, have the grace to acknowledge that it was because our genius soared so far above her comprehension that she could not appreciate it. 'By and by,' mamma adds, 'when we take our stand in London.'

My brother Mendelssohn is then to become a celebrated composer. Here he finds it rather slow work, because, as mamma

says, among musicians the very surest way of being kept back is to possess rare genius. Jealous rivals are always anxious to quench it, and a provincial public always unwilling to acknowledge it. 'When there is no genius at all,' she explains, 'there is extra physical strength; and that always succeeds in pushing its way to the van. Wait a little, dear boy.'

He is very patient; he does wait a little, indeed he waits a good deal; and during his waiting he evinces, in many ways, what a true musician he is. He invariably goes about with a morocco music-case in his hand; he wears his hair very long (I believe this to be the most important thing of all); he likes the window open when he plays 'to himself;' and he always sits with his head inclined to one side when listening to an amateur, and wears an expression of generous forbearance, based on superiority. Yet, for all these unmistakable signs, the van seems a good way off; owing of course to the prevalence of physical strength and the rarity of mental.

Mendelssohn is not disheartened, however, and continues to make steps towards that public sensation which he is, by and by, to create in the London orchestras. He has appeared again and again (and yet again) before a section of the British public, at what are called 'Penny Readings.' I write are called advisedly, because we Pilkingtons always drop the financial adjective, out of consideration for Mendelssohn's feelings.

I shall not soon forget our excitement over his first appearance; no, not very soon.

'Mendelssohn Pilkington has kindly consented to perform a fantasia of his own composing.'

This fact the programmes stated; and though perhaps the expression was a trifle strong, considering how generously he had proffered his valuable services, the British public did not know anything about that; so it was all right. The fantasia was called 'Whisperings by Moonlight;' and during the week before the Reading, we held a series of undress rehearsals at home to hear new bits. I am so exactly like poor dear papa in being without soul, that I found the greatest difficulty in distinguishing the new bits from the old, and covered myself with confusion as with a garment, until my opinions and criticisms were universally ignored. I must confess that a weight was lifted from me then. I no longer strained my ears and intellect, and disgraced myself by inquiring when the air would come. I sat comfortably in the background, and admired the excellence Mendelssohn had attained—in the art of tossing back his hair just when an exciting race down the piano had ended in a triumphant bang at the winning-post in the bass.

On the night of that first Reading the music-hall was crowded. It might have been because the coin necessary for admission was

within the reach of most Stafford householders; but it might also have been because the ladies and gentlemen who requested us to See their Oars had given away as many admissions as had the composer's mother, who glowed with pride to such an extent, when Mendelssohn Pilkington, Esq., sauntered dreamily to the piano, that I besought her to unfasten her collar.

Mendelssohn bowed with an abstracted air, and the clapping was (so the papers said next day) vociferous. It does not matter who began it—I consider that a private affair of mother's—but when it had quite subsided he sat down, tossed back his hair with finished professional skill, and began to introduce 'Whisperings by Moonlight.' His expression of countenance was beautiful, being dreamy and abstracted in the extreme, and growing more and more so as he played on—and on—and on. A young lady near me (she was not very young) asked me, with an ecstatic clasp of her hands, if it were not exactly like whisperings by moonlight, and I nodded. There are several kinds of whisperings possible by moonlight, and this might have been upon the subject of mice behind the wainscot.

It dawned upon me by degrees that the introduction would have equally served its purpose if it had been half the length; but when I ventured to broach this idea to mother, she uttered such a deep and impressive 'Hush!' that I collapsed immediately. And just then a clashing final chord broke upon this seeming introduction, and Mendelssohn rose, and graciously bowed aside the applause which of course he knew he merited. The Whisperings were over then, and I had wasted a glorious opportunity by supposing them only introduction. And I'm sure the reason that the applause was not deafening was because mother's supporters were as much taken by surprise as I had been to find that they had missed a point—the similarity of our ideas is easily accounted for, because they belonged to the Brewery, and it was the Brewery nature which I inherited from poor dear papa.

'Wait until you receive an ovation in Exeter Hall, my son,' said mamma, when we all affectionately clustered round Mendelssohn and complimented him on his début.

And that is, I believe, what he is now waiting for.

My brother Raphael is waiting too—for his pictures to abound at the Academy, of which he always speaks as if he had been represented there for years; and indeed it is scarcely his fault that he has not, for he has given the Hanging Committee many and many an opportunity. I am glad to say he is less easily depressed than was the painter whose name he bears, and as soon as ever a picture is returned to him, he begins to talk of the one which is to make a sensation at the following exhibition. He takes very little time to select and arrange his subject, and the working out of his design is easy to him, 'not only,' as mamma explains, 'because

he has real genius, but because he also has the advantage of possessing a beautiful model in his eldest sister.' Last year he sent a gigantic painting, so large indeed that we never entertained a doubt as to its acceptance. The subject was Cleopatra rising in wrath from her throne to dismiss the messenger who brought her the news of Marc Antony's marriage; and though possibly some people may think Cleopatra rather hackneyed as a subject, they would have lost this thought when they contemplated Raphael's picture. His Cleopatra was so strikingly new and original, that that fact alone ought to have insured its election. A bold stroke of genius always deserves success, and it was a bold stroke of genius to ignore the superb dark Eastern beauty with which everybody is familiar in the Egyptian queen, and to bring her forward with freshness before a satiated British public as a small, smiling, blue-eyed young person, using timid gestures, and possessing the meekest of mouths.

'There are some people put into office, my dears,' remarks the artist's mother suggestively, as she makes room for the cumbersome packing-case on its return to Raphael's studio, 'who are totally unfitted for the post they have to fill. They have plodded their way into a kind of fame, and are jealous of all rising talent. But you will be above fretting over such petty feelings, dear boy. Great men must always have great enemies. If you had been on the spot you could have asserted yourself; and so we must be in town against your next picture is ready. Being on the spot will be good for all of you, especially for Mary-Wortley.' Mamma always con-

nected the names by a hyphen.

With the scepticism which I inherit from poor dear papa, I inquire whether publishers are obliged to accept the work of a Londoner.

'My dear Belinda,' mamma says graciously, 'you understand extremely little about this sort of thing. Your sister will soon get introduced in literary circles, and then her name and her fortune are made.'

I am very glad to hear this, because it will be an advantage indirectly to me too, as the sister of a popular authoress. At present she finds it difficult to get her literary ventures appreciated; indeed she never has yet had a story accepted for a magazine, doubtless because in literature, as well as in art, physical strength succeeds so much better than mental. The constantly recurring return of her manuscripts has its advantages, by allowing her extended opportunities of trying every field; and while each tale is away we enjoy a period of the proudest excitement. As soon as ever it is posted we look upon it as accepted and successful, and we all congratulate her. She bears this very well, and brings out her note-book oftener and more professionally than ever, that she may jot down incidents and ideas which 'will do'—an expression

which, in its vagueness, has a thoroughly literary sound. This note-book is to be the foundation of greatness for her, and on its title-page Raphael has illuminated an appropriate line—a little altered—from Tupper: 'Walketh in pleasures multitudiness the woman ennobled by her pen.' And at the other end is an index of her stories in the order in which (after their appearance in various magazines) they are to be republished in three volumes. It is just as well to be in time with these things, else one might fancy that it would be soon enough to arrange this after they have been accepted for the periodical.

While a manuscript is out on its preferment, Mary-Wortley comports herself with great success as the Distinguished Authoress. It does one good to hear the pleasant graciousness with which, when any sympathising friend inquires for what magazine she is writing now, she names the one to which her story has been offered; and it does one still more good to hear mamma, in the plenitude of her pride and confidence,—when she can find a complimentary review on a successful novel,—reading it aloud to us, and substituting Mary-Wortley Pilkington for the name of the real author. During the time that the manuscript is away in abeyance, we take a most absorbing interest in the particular serial at whose office it lies; but on its return we find an entire change in our sentiments. We glance superciliously through the contents of a new number, and elevate our noses as if no power could ever tempt us to read such trash.

'I think it behoves this editor,' mamma remarks, 'to be a little more careful in his choice of matter. It is not only important what he accepts, but still more so what he rejects. The magazine is falling off, and some change should be made before it is too late.'

When the manuscript is sent off again, in search of an editor who is not so obstinately determined to stand in his own light, we all cheer up once more, and talk again hopefully of the time when our house in London—and our level—shall be found.

Mamma's chief reason for being so hard to please in the choice of our abode is caused by Hebe's youthful loveliness—I say youthful loveliness because her name seems to keep her unusually youthful for her years.

'If my beautiful child is to be thrown among ineligible partis,' mamma sighs, 'I shall never know a minute's peace. Attractive as her style of beauty is, I must arrange that it shall attract in the proper direction. Hebe will by and by, I have no doubt, make a match which shall place her among the aristocracy. If, for instance, I bestow her on a wealthy and worthy baronet, I shall feel that I have done my duty, and shall not be ashamed to meet her poor dear papa again beyond the tomb. Of course when your brothers have become famous, Belinda, you will have the extrée into all society:

but it will be of special advantage to you to be the sister of a leader of haut ton, and you can make most interesting conversation about your brother-in-law the earl.'

In five minutes more the earl would have developed into a marquis; but the conversation diverges a little. 'Hebe's beautiful face,' mamma concludes pensively, 'will soon be made familiar to London society by Raphael's pictures.'

I suggest that in London Raphael can engage a professional model; but I regret the suggestion afterwards, because mamma is so hurt, and inquires so warmly if I imagine that any of those hardworking paid women could be as lovely as his own sister, or as capable of falling into graceful attitudes?

Having made the first step, the second seems comparatively easy, and I intimate that variety may possibly possess a charm for that benighted institution the British public. I try to recall the words, and pretend I didn't mean them, when I witness their effect; but I am obliged to look on while mamma, with even more distress than usual, weeps over my striking resemblance to poor dear papa.

'My dear Belinda,' she sighs, when her tears gradually subside into gracious forbearance, 'you never quite understand what you say. Is there not a never-ceasing variety in Raphael's method of depicting his sister? Is there any likeness (beyond the face) between Joan of Arc in armour, drawing the arrow from her neck, and Little Nell sitting alone in the churchyard? The features are of course the same, and that is well. I'm sure I am sorry in my heart for those poor artists who have no sister such as Hebe to paint. And certainly it ought to please even you to think how Raphael's pictures will, by and by, extend the fame of Hebe's loveliness.'

I am not sure that it pleases me very much—indeed I don't know why it should—and I only say (because I'm so like poor dear papa) that they will of course do so when their own fame is extended. Then I go on placidly waiting, as all the others do, for that London house upon the pinnacle of fame, which mamma assures us is to be ours by and by.

Sometimes there darts into my head that uncomfortable old Spanish proverb, 'By the street of By-and-by one arrives at the house of Never;' but I'm careful not to utter it aloud, for that isn't by any means the kind of house we want.

### HOW I FOUGHT MY FIRST DUEL

'Louis, they want you to meet Klein to-morrow morning. Special. Can you manage?'

'Of course I can; I can't plead unhealed wounds as an excuse,' I answered, with a grin. 'What is the time, and whereabouts?'

'Five o'clock sharp, at the forest pool,' was the reply; and Fischer, laying his hand gently on my shoulder, looked me kindly and inquiringly in the face. 'Now, youngster,' he said gravely, 'it's a scandalous "Bestimmung;" and if you'd like to have another week or two of practice, I'll let you have it. Don't be afraid to accept my offer; I'll think none the worse of you, lad; for Klein is an ugly customer to deal with.'

'Thanks, Fischer, you're a trump; but I must accept. If the cartel-bearer had been any one else but cousin Fritz, I might have jumped at your offer, but now I cannot; Fritz would be ashamed of me; besides, I think I can make it pretty warm work for Klein.'

'All right, youngster,' said Fischer, with a pleased smile. 'Don't drink any more when you have finished that glass, but get off home as soon as your cousin leaves, and turn in at once. I'll call you in plants of time, so don't be never a cheat being lete.'

plenty of time, so don't be nervous about being late.'

And with these words Fischer nodded pleasantly to me, and went back to cousin Fritz. I saw their two heads come close together; then Fritz glanced quickly at me, gave an almost imperceptible nod of approbation, and jotted down something in his note-book.

As soon as the list—a pretty long one—had been gone through, the two second officers closed and pocketed their books. This done, Fritz chatted with those near him till he had finished his beer, and then the two officers rose, bowed to each other, and with another bow to those in his immediate neighbourhood my cousin left the 'Kneipe.'

As soon as the door was closed Fischer pulled out his pocketbook, and rapping the table smartly with his glass, cried out,

'Silentium!'

No need for that. Our corps, the Zythusia, and Fritz's corps, the Vinumia, were at bitter enmity, and we all knew the cartel-list would be a so-called 'murder-list,' that is, one in which the chal-

\* This slang expression has no English equivalent, 'match' being the nearest approach to it. When a German student says he is 'bestimmt' he means that a duel has been arranged between another person and himself, with or without his own consent or knowledge.

lenging corps matches its best swordsmen against the worst of the challenged corps. And a murder-list it was with a vengeance. Three of our fellows would be horribly wounded—try a runaway knock at Death's door, as one of them grimly remarked—three others would be severely cut up, two would perhaps manage to give as much as they got, while only one of us would thrash his man.

'And now, you fellows,' said Fischer, when he had finished reading the challenges, 'I've got something else to tell you; so pay attention. You all know that the Vinumer have got visitors. Well, these strangers want to see how we fight here in Volleulenheim, and we have been honoured by the request to produce a worthy representative, but under most peculiar circumstances, I must confess. The Vinumer think they can impress their visitors more by showing them how Volleulenheimer "foxes" can fight, and Mülheim came this evening expressly to arrange a meeting between his cousin Louis and Klein. If Louis had objected or shown the slightest disinclination, I should at once have refused to allow the duel, and would have placed myself at their service to meet any one whom they chose to name; but Louis agrees to fight; and I want you now to drink a bumper to his success, and then we'll give him the "battle song" before he goes home.'

The toast was drunk with an enthusiasm that gratified my pride intensely, and I was further honoured by their singing the 'battle song,' which is seldom done unless the impending duel be one of great interest. Although I had never yet been out, the reputation I had won in the fencing-saloon was such that the Vinumer deemed me a worthy opponent for their crack 'fox' swordsman, who had already fought five duels, and nearly killed his man each time. Klein and I had been great chums at school, but he left for the university six months before me; and as we had joined different corps it thus came to pass that two old friends would on the morrow engage in a perhaps fatal fight, simply because they were ordered to do so by the officers of their respective corps. While some of my corps' brothers were congratulating me on my chance of winning such honourable distinction, and others condoling with me on my being matched against so formidable an opponent, an enthusiastic cry of joyous welcome was uttered as Dornberg, the pride of the corps, sauntered jauntily into the room.

A tall powerfully-built young fellow, his countenance strikingly handsome and intellectual, with laughing gray eyes that would sometimes light up fiercely in moments of great excitement, and a mouth so expressive that it was impossible not to feel attracted by the genial smile that often lurked upon it; short curly brown hair, massive forehead strongly marked by a long deep scar, clean-shaven and rather pale face,—his was a head that deservedly won for him the name of 'handsome Dornberg.' As a swordsman he was bril-

liant, daring, and effective; as a second, unequalled; as a student, intolerably lazy. After four years wasted at the university, his exasperated father recalled him home. A few months afterwards he managed, by some means or another, to appease his irritated father, and returned to us to be welcomed as one welcomes a dearly loved friend.

When the uproar created by his appearance had somewhat abated, Dornberg was told of my engagement for the next day; and, after commenting in rather severe terms upon the inequality of the match, offered to second me on my first appearance.

'Is he as good as Klein?' he asked-'I mean in saloon

fencing.'

- 'Much about the same,' answered Fischer; 'his high cuts are better; but then, you see, he has never been out, and is sure to be nervous at first, whereas Klein has got any amount of confidence now.'
- 'Well, I must do my best,' replied Dornberg. 'Can we save the "Abfuhr," do you think?'

'You can.'

'Then that will do. Now, youngster, shake hands and be off to bed. We'll see you through all right to-morrow, so sleep easily on that score. Who's to call you?'

'Fischer was kind enough to promise that,' I answered.

'Ah, then you may feel yourself flattered. The second officers don't usually call the "foxes;" but I suppose it is to be something out of the common. Well, good-night, my lad, and sleep well; and above all don't get up before you're called.'

So off I went in high spirits, flattered by the notice that was taken of me; confident, now Dornberg was going to be my second, that I should escape very severe treatment at Klein's hands; and fondly imagining that by some lucky chance or other I might on the morrow surpass myself, and do credit to the corps whose colours I wore, I threw myself on my bed, and soon afterwards fell fast asleep.

I have often wondered since that I could sleep so easily when in such a novel and trying position; for many a night had I lain awake, restless and uneasy, wondering how I should comport myself when I should be obliged to fight in earnest. Either I had gained confidence through the knowledge of Dornberg's arrival, or else things dreaded are less feared when present than when in prospect. At any rate, the fact is certain that I looked forward to my next morning's adventure with great composure and in tranquil confidence.

<sup>\*</sup> When a man receives a wound so dangerous that another blow would prove fatal, the surgeon stops the duel. This is an 'Abfuhr,' and the wounded man is said to be 'abgeführt' (i.e. led away).



Shortly after four o'clock I was suddenly roused from my sleep, and, starting up in bed, saw Fischer coolly filling his pockets with cigars he found lying loose on the table, while Dornberg was amusing himself by balancing a chair on his chin.

'Now then, youngster,' cried Fischer, when he saw I was awake, 'look alive, we've no time to lose; so while you're dressing I'll get breakfast ready, if you'll show me where the things are kept.'

Giving him the desired information, I jumped out of bed, and

began to dress with all speed.

'I say, Louis,' said Dornberg, who by this time had tired of playing the acrobat, 'what cut do you find the greatest difficulty in parrying?'

'Horizontal tierce,' I answered; although such was not the

case.

- ' Never mind that; Klein can't cut it with the sharp edge.'
- 'It's lucky for me that he can't.'

' Why?'

'Because if he could you wouldn't be able to stop it,' I retorted maliciously; for the most difficult task a second can have is to stop this cut unperceived.

'There, stop that, you young rascal,' replied Dornberg in affected anger, as he threw a thick quarto volume at my head.

'Hallo, you fellows!' cried Fischer, looking up as he made a pause in his cooking operations; 'what on earth are you thinking of, kicking up such an infernal row at this hour of the morning? Why, you'll be having Louis's landlord fetching the police, or letting them know what's in the wind; besides that, you ought to know better, Dornberg, than play such a dirty trick; you might have hurt Louis, and put an end to the whole affair even before it had begun. Come, youngster, no more humbug; be as quiet as you can, and don't exert yourself; for you will have need of all your strength and energy in a very short time. And you, Dornberg, just get the bread and butter—sugar too, if you can find it—anything to keep you out of mischief. It's enough to provoke a saint to see old fellows like you act as if they didn't care a button for the corps. I suppose you would think it fine fun if Klein were to thrash the youngster in the first two or three rounds.'

'Don't be a fool, Fischer,' laughed Dornberg; 'if you had not been so interested in watching that crazy old coffee-machine you might have seen I never intended to touch Louis; and as for the row, why, I don't think you'd wake old Fusel if you blew the house ap. Now just leave that coffee alone for a moment, and tell me what cuts I must look after, for that impudent young scamp there seems to fancy himself unassailable.'

'O, does he?' growled Fischer; 'then I hope he mayn't find himself mistaken. All I can say is, that you'll have to keep a

sharp look-out for sabre cartes and low cartes in second and third cuts; above all, mind the sabre cartes; they come like lightning, and are as strong as a horse's kick. Never mind the "Durchgerissene" (horizontal cuts in carte peculiar to the Schläger), 'Louis will manage to stop those; the lad's quick enough, but I doubt the accuracy of his parry in the upper and lower portions; so you must be ready to fall in on any pretext.'

We were all seated at table by this time, sipping the hot coffee as quickly as we dared; for although my lodgings were not more than a quarter of an hour's walk from the appointed place, we did

not wish to be behind time, but rather the reverse.

'Well, youngster, how do you feel now?' asked Dornberg,

smiling good-naturedly.

'O, all right,' I answered as unconcernedly as I could, although I knew well enough that it was not 'all right.' Somehow or other the coffee seemed to have an oily taste, that did not agree with me; the bread, hard; the butter, detestable; yet I felt bound to eat -although I had not the shadow of an appetite-lest I should lower myself in the estimation of my two comrades; conscious the while that my feigned vigorous attacks on the food did not deceive them in the slightest. Nor did it: I am certain of that. had had their first duel to fight, and however trifling the danger may be, you cannot look upon it with unconcern. Some may be affected less than others, but all experience a certain amount of discomposure; everything is arranged so coolly and in so businesslike a manner that one has plenty of time for reflection; no passion, no intense mental excitement to relieve the strain on the nerves. It is the unknown, the mysterious, the ignorance of one's own power, that makes the affair so peculiarly irritating to one's nervous temperament. But all these sensations disappear by degrees; so that when you have been out half a dozen times you are able to treat the affair as coolly as you would a bout in the fencing-school.

'All right, are you?' said Dornberg, with a peculiar smile. 'I'm glad to hear it.'

After taking another sip of the almost boiling coffee, he continued,

'Feel a little queer here, though?' laying his hand on his stomach; 'an empty sort of feeling—not exactly cold, but shivery, eh?'

'No-o-o; well—yes,' I answered rather hesitatingly, wondering how he should know the exact symptoms I experienced, and half determined to deny the fact.

'Ay, my lad, that's just how I felt. What do you say, Fi-

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scher; weren't you troubled like that?'

'Yes, something of that sort, I think,' answered Fischer, with a grin; 'but one soon gets over it. Don't let that bother you, youngster.'

'No, don't be anxious on that account,' added Dornberg; 'you'll feel all right when you have crossed swords a couple of minutes. But come, it's time we left. And now, Louis, empty your cup, my lad; you'll feel all the better for it.'

I took his advice, and thought the flavour of the coffee had

wonderfully improved during the last moment or two.

As we walked along the narrow pathway across the fields, the rapid motion of our walk and the cool fresh air of a delightful spring morning acted on me like some invigorating draught. Unconsciously I broke into a merry little snatch of some popular student's song, and then stopped as suddenly as I had begun, astonished at my own coolness.

'Feeling all right now, I see,' said Dornberg good-naturedly, as he put his arm through mine. 'Take my word for it, when once you've tasted blood, you'll want as much of it as you can get,

and as often as you can.'

'Perhaps I may,' I answered, with a forced laugh; 'but'some people are satisfied without it. Look at Vogt, he never goes out now.'

'Ay,' returned Dornberg gravely; 'but you see Vogt killed his man, and a thirst for blood does not imply a thirst for life.'

Then changing the conversation, as if he doubted its efficacy

in cheering me up, he continued,

'You wouldn't undertake a fine stroke at billiards now, I suppose, eh, my boy? Nerves rather too excited, I should say; at

least they should be if you feel as I felt on my first affair.'

'Shut up, Dornberg, and don't try to make the lad nervous,' remonstrated Fischer; 'it doesn't matter what you felt at first, but what you did afterwards. Now, Louis, don't take any notice of him; he's always trying to make people believe he's a regular molly-coddle. Why, how do you think I found him one day? Fast asleep; and he was going to fight Oehlenschläger! You've heard what sort of a swordsman that fellow was—a crasher, and no mistake. Yes; there was Dornberg half an hour before time, and as no one had come, what does he do but lie down in the shade and go to sleep, and rest his head on his right arm too, like the thoughtless fool he was. It was well I came early, or he might have been so stiff in the arm that he could not have done anything. I gave him a bit of my mind, I can tell you, although he was my superior officer; for he had no right to do aught that might affect the corps through him.'

'Ah,' said Dornberg comically, as he chuckled at the reminiscence, 'you should have heard the wigging he gave me! I could hardly believe my ears. I never knew the like. "Will you get up, you fool, you idiot? I never knew such a thoughtless donkey! By heavens, you deserve to have your skull cracked, and I hope

you may! No, I don't, either, for that would count against us; but it would serve you right all the same. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you—you—"'

And Dornberg foamed and spluttered and danced about in imitation of Fischer's memorable sermon, looking so ineffably ridiculous that I could not help roaring with laughter, while Fischer himself in vain attempted to frown down this ludicrous exhibition.

'Come along, you fellows,' he growled, after a fruitless attempt to suppress a smile,—'come along, or we shall be late; see, the Vinumer are there already.'

We were now close to the appointed place, and found fifty or sixty students already assembled there, early as it was. The Vinumer had taken up their quarters at the near side of the little lake, while our fellows were stationed some twenty paces further on. Midway between us were the two other corps—near to us the Schnäpen, and between them and the Vinumer were the Spirituser, who had placed themselves about half way between us and our foes; this appearance of impartiality being owing to the fact that they provided the 'Unpartheiischer' or judge. To get to our position we had to pass through the Vinumer camp, and I soon caught sight of Klein, who, while practising a few 'Lufthiebe,'\* that whistled shrilly, and to my ears most ominously, was laughing and joking with a group of youngsters.

As soon as he saw me he discontinued his practice, and, as we passed, gave a friendly nod, which I of course returned. Just before we came up to them, we heard one of the Vinumer youngsters say, 'Give it him, Klein, and teach those Zythuser "foxes" to—' Here Klein cut him short abruptly by telling him to hold his tongue, but not before Fischer had heard the youngster.

'O my man,' he muttered savagely, 'I'll see whether the Zythuser "foxes" don't teach you to keep a quiet tongue in your head. Here, my lad,' he continued, catching hold of one of our youngsters, 'do you see that "fox"? Yes? Then challenge him to-night, and tell every other "fox" to do the same. D'ye understand? But mind—wait till we leave this place. No quarrelling here.'

'There,' said Dornberg, 'you've raised a hornets' nest now. There will be a regular "fox" warfare, for their men will be sure to retaliate.'

'What do I care?' answered Fischer grimly; 'it will teach them to be civil at any rate. By the bye, I don't see Mülheim here.'

'Nor either of the other officers,' said I. 'Visitors sleepy, I suppose.'

<sup>\*</sup> Practice cuts in the air (whence the name), to insure the certainty of cutting with the sharp edge. A sharp cut always causes a whistling sound; a flat one a dull vibration, similar to the sound made by blowing through the loosely closed lips.

'I suppose so,' grunted Fischer. 'Ah, here they come, thank geodness!'

And going forward to meet them, he touched his cap to Mülheim, who, returning the greeting, stepped aside with him for a moment.

- 'May we go on now?' suggested our second officer. 'Both men here.'
- 'Very well, Herr Fischer, I'll see to it at once. But how about the sentries?'
  - 'O, let the "Fuchs-Majoren" (junior officers) 'settle that.'
- 'As you like; only as the youngsters seem very excited about this affair, I promised to see if we could manage for reliefs every ten minutes. We shall only want three sentries, one at the end of the chaussée, another at the cross-roads, and a third on the skirts of the forest. If you don't object to this arrangement I shall be happy to furnish the first relay.'

'Much obliged, Herr Mülheim; quite agreeable. But it's hardly fair to send so many of your youngsters off at once. I'll supply one for the cross-roads, and you send the other twe; then in ten minutes we change about.'

'Thanks; that will do admirably.'

'Them we may get ready?'

'Yours to command, Herr Fischer.'

And the two officers, separating with renewed cap-touching, called upon their respective men to strip.

While the youngsters were bandaging me, after I had stripped to the waist, Dornberg, Fischer, and one or two others kept my mind fully occupied by enumerating Klein's favourite tricks, and

telling me how to avoid and how to meet them.

In Schläger duels the only parts attempted are the head and breast, yet, although my right arm was bandaged with thick rolls of silk to enable me to parry the attacks of my adversary, I nevertheless felt myself open on every side, and wondered how on earth Klein would be able to miss hitting me; whereas, when I looked at him, I quite despaired of ever touchng him, so thoroughly protected did he seem to be. The bandages were as follows: the axillarius, which protects the armpit; the arm and wrist bandages; a thick roll of silk round the neck in form of a cravat, to prevent the jugular from being cut; a coarse old shirt, and canvas or leather halftrousers protecting the stomach and thighs, although no man ever dreams of attacking those parts, on account of the tremendous risks he would incur in doing so. Small thin plates of iron, known as duelling spectacles, which cover the socket and protect the eyeball, complete the equipment. The Schläger itself is a splendidly-balanced weapon, with a straight double-edged blade about threequarters of an inch broad near the hilt and half an inch at the point.

The blade is not only narrow, but thin, pliable, and, for about eighteen inches from the point, sharp as a razor. It is so light that strangers to the weapon ridicule the idea that it is possible to do much damage with it, but a true swordsman who appreciates delicate manipulation cannot praise it too highly. In a word, it is to the sabre what the foil is to the bayonet.

The seconds wear thick caps with deep broad peaks, leather pads before the neck, short padded aprons, and thick padded leather gauntlets that reach to the shoulder; they are also provided with dull swords.

Everything being now ready, we were marched out to our respective positions, each of us having his bandaged arm supported by a youngster, so that the heavy weight should tire us as little as Dornberg took his place behind me; Mülheim in the rear of Klein; Brauntwein of the Spirituser occupied his place as judge midway on one side; while Busch of the Vinumia and Fischer, as our witnesses, stood on our right, and held the swords we were going to use. Such was the case, though I did not see the different persons I have mentioned: I saw nothing but Klein's pale face and his dark eyes gleaming behind the black-rimmed spectacles; but I know it must have been so, these being the positions usually occupied. After trying a few 'Lufthiebe' with our swords to see that they sat well in the hand and were set truly, during which exercise I was delighted to find that my cuts whistled as merrily as those of my opponent, we handed the weapons back to our witnesses. pause, and then Brauntwein drew out his watch, note-book, and pencil.

'All ready?' he asked.

'All ready,' came echoed from both sides.

'Silentium for the duel.'

Cousin Fritz now took the word.

'Cross your blades, ready, go!'

Immediately following the last word came Klein's attack with surpassing force. I parried, returned, parried again; and then, with a sudden cry of 'Halt!' Dornberg sprang in and covered me from any possible attack.

He had determined to allow only short rounds, so that my being a little weaker than Klein should not be made use of to my disadvantage by my opponent wearying me with long rounds. Seconds interpose and stop the round (Gang) on various pretexts—a pretended belief that the other side has been wounded, the slightest disorder in the bandages of their own principal, a bend in one of the swords, a supposititious irregularity committed by the opponents, and other reasons of like nature. This enables them to curtail the rounds at pleasure as their judgment prompts, thus

rendering of great importance the post of second, as he must

not only be cool, judicious, and quick-sighted, swift in decision and prompt in action, but also quick-witted enough to invent an excuse for his interposition. Should his excuse be considered invalid, he is warned for the first time; the third warning is followed by dismissal from his post, which is taken by another. It naturally follows that the opposite side do their utmost to remove a good second by this means, not only because it gives their man a better chance, but also because it casts a reflection upon the honour of their adversaries. Such manœuvres are only resorted to when a very bitter feeling exists between the two corps, or when the second is personally objectionable. When corps are on a friendly footing, it is tacitly understood that the rounds may be stopped at any time without any excuse being necessary. But between us and the Vinumer the hatred was so intense that every means was employed to harass each other.

When Dornberg sprang in and covered me, cousin Fritz asked

sharply,

'Why halt?'

This question was addressed to the judge, who is supposed to be the medium of communication between the seconds. Brauntwein simply turned to Dornberg without speaking, and received for reply,

'Please to examine head on other side.'

The judge's eyes twinkled comically as he gravely stalked up to Klein; and passing his hand through my adversary's hair, looked at it to see if it was stained with blood.

'Nichts da' (Nothing there), was his decision.

Whereupon the Vinumer crew howled derisively; while we answered with a contemptuous smile, to the great amusement of the two neutral corps,

'The Herr Unpartheiischer is requested to order the seconds

"on the cross," said cousin Fritz.

'The seconds requested to take up position cross-wise,' echoed Brauntwein, retiring a little to make room for the change of position effected by Dornberg and Fritz placing themselves equidistant from Klein and myself, so that the principals and seconds stood on the points of an imaginary cross, thus rendering the interference of the seconds more difficult and dangerous.

This done, Dornberg intimated that all was ready, whereupon Fritz gave the word of command; and again did Klein's attack follow with incredible swiftness, while my return blow was stopped by

Fritz, who hurriedly appealed to the judge:

'Bitte, den Blutigen zu erklären' (Please to make a note of that wound), pointing to the blood trickling down my right temple.

Immediately on receiving Klein's blow, I felt a sharp, sudden, burning sensation just above my temple, followed by an exquisite feeling of pleasurable relief as the blood welled slowly forth—a feel-

ing indescribably grateful and delicious, but, unhappily, fleeting and transient as the reflection of distant lightning.

Fischer, Dornberg, and the doctor were with me in an instant;

but only for a moment.

"Schmiss" or "Blutiger"?" I asked of Fischer as he was

turning away.

'O, it's nothing—a strong "Blutiger," about an inch and a half long, but not deep. Look out for sabre cartes now,' he whispered, and took up his old position.

I took the hint and planned accordingly.

When cousin Fritz again gave the word, I waited cautiously; and parrying the terrific sabre carte that Klein led with, I returned a 'Durchgerissener' as strongly and as quickly as I could.

'Halt!' cried Dornberg triumphantly, springing in between us as he pointed to Klein, who had ducked forward to let the blood, which was pouring fast from his forehead, fall clear of his clothes.

Then, with a sarcastic smile, he sneeringly repeated the remark which had called forth such derision from the Vinumer at the beginning of the duel,

'Please to examine head on other side.'

Brauntwein nodded coldly, and, without stirring from his place, jotted down the report in his note-book; while the other side acknowledged our sarcastic cheers with furious glances.

Fischer, who had been casting inquisitive looks at Klein's wound, now came up and slapped me on the back encouragingly.

'Three needles at least, you young beggar,' said he, thus intimating that the wound was rather severe.

When the doctor had stanched the wound for a minute or two, he retired, and we prepared for a fresh round. Klein's appearance now was anything but one tending to inspire confidence—his lips set, his eyes gleaming, and the blood gushing from his wound with every breath he drew. But it made no impression on me: I had tasted blood, and, as Dornberg had said, I thirsted for more. My feelings then were of savage brutality, and my most passionate desire a wish to wound afresh. When, how, I did not care; but do it I must. Again the blows fell; but this time the attack came from me, Klein exerting himself but little—playing, in fact, a waiting game.

Once I attempted his head with high carte; but my blow fell short—the screw of the blade, which projects beyond the hilt, had caught in my wrist bandage. Return on guard I could not, and I gave myself up for lost as I saw Klein's sword sweep on with a rush like lightning. That half-second was an hour of torture. I heard Dornberg's shriek of 'Halt!' saw something black flit past my eyes,

<sup>\*</sup> A 'Schmiss' is a wound requiring to be sewn; a 'Blutiger,' one for which plaster suffices.

and then the grating rush of Klein's sword fell on my ears as it swept harmlessly up the blade of Dornberg's weapon.

A murmur of admiration from friend and foe greeted this bril-

liant example of my second's skill.

'Warum eingesprungen?' (Why interposed?) cried Fritz.

'Sword caught,' was Dornberg's quiet answer.

I held it out to Brauntwein.

'It is so,' was his decision.

'Proceed,' said Fritz angrily, although he was my cousin.

Three or four short rounds, in which nothing beyond a few scratches occurred, and then Klein suddenly took the aggressive so unexpectedly that he was successful. A feint in tierce, a parry in the same, and then a horizontal tierce came crashing through my right cheek. Now it was my turn to lower my head and spit out the blood that came rushing into my mouth; while our fellows were too anxious and too disconsolate to care for the triumphant glances of the Vinumer.

Again was I examined by the doctor, Dornberg, and Fischer; but this time they did not turn away after a superficial glance.

'Stiff,' muttered the doctor when he had concluded his examination.

'Bad?' asked Dornberg.

- 'Yes,' was the answer. 'I don't know whether I ought not to advise an "Abfuhr," for it will leave a nasty scar unless soon looked after.'
- 'Damn the scar!' said Fischer testily; 'who cares about that? Can he go on without much risk?'
- 'Yes,' returned the doctor in a pet,—for he didn't relish Fischer's tone,—'if you keep the rounds short and the rests long, and stanch the blood effectually; but if he gets another tap on the

top of that, he-'

'All right,' interrupted Fischer rudely, for he was not in a very pleasant humour. Then to me: 'Never mind the scratch, youngster; it's not worth speaking of; and if it won't heal nicely you must let your beard grow. Go in with a tierce as hard as you can, and look out sharp for horizontal returns. Are you ready, or will you rest a bit longer?'

'Nur zu' (Drive ahead), I answered.

'All right, my lad. That's the way to do your work,' he added, with a pleased smile.

What did Fischer tell you to do?' asked Dornberg, coming up.

'High tierce as hard as I could.'

He looked grave for a moment as he muttered,

'It will leave him confoundedly open.' Then, 'What parry?'

'Against horizontal returns.'

'Ah,' said Dornberg, with a quiet chuckle, 'that fellow knows

his business and Klein's ways to a T. Now be quick with your attack, and you'll have him; mind, wrist well up.'

Again in position. As the last word of command dropped from my cousin's mouth, I obeyed the orders given to me. A shrill hiss, a crashing thud, and Klein, jerking up his hand, staggered backwards and fell into the arms of one of his corps-brothers, who sprang forward to catch him.

Intense excitement and commotion followed. My corps-brothers gathered round me with noisy and joyous congratulations. Suddenly Fischer broke his way through.

'Quiet, you brutes!' he cried savagely, as he turned on a laughing couple. Then to me, 'Strip and dress. Lotz of the Schnäpsia will stitch your cut up. Now, you youngsters, what are you staring at? Pack the things up at once, and hold your tongues, and off with you.'

'What's the matter?' I asked anxiously, as the fellows silently

dispersed.

'A toss-up whether he lives or dies,' he answered curtly, but not unkindly, as he caught sight of my face.

For three days and nights did Klein's life hang on a thread. How I suffered during that time I will not say; but at last the doctors gave signs of hope, and after a long weary illness Klein once more appeared among us.

He never fought again: another wound on the same place would

have caused instant death.

The anxious inquiries made by our fellows during Klein's illness, and their evident sympathy and concern, promoted a better feeling between the Vinumer and us, resulting in the recall of their last 'murder-list,' and the substitution of one unassailable in its impartiality.

#### THE CHILTERN HILLS

GIVEN a pair of intelligent eyes, a sturdy understanding in the shape of legs, with lungs and appetite to match, and a man in his prime need never fail to enjoy his occasional holiday with more than the zest of a schoolboy. Formerly Shanks his mare was not considered an animal fit to carry a gentleman. Nowadays, when competition has elbowed blue blood into the gutter, and it is a positive disadvantage to have had a grandfather, your gentleman must trudge, whilst his pork-butcher's thoroughbred kicks up the mud in his face. After all, walking, except of course in tight or cornucopian boots, is of hardships the one nearest akin to luxury. 'We can't all be tailors,' remarked a certain illustrious personage to Puddle the snip, who had objected that the company at Baden was 'mixed'; à fortiori some of us cannot be eldest sons and inherit ancestral Wherefore a fate which may not be cured must e'en be estates. endured.

Now the question which a pedestrian naturally asks himself, when contemplating a serious excursion is, 'Where to?' If we are at all acquainted with the inner consciousness of the denizens of Babylonia, this query is a poser for most people. You know by heart every tree in Combe Wood and Richmond Park. The river you have done, and been done by in the shape of riverain hostelries, till the very sound of the word Thames palls upon your ear. With the conifers of Walton and Weybridge you are desperately familiar. Harrow-on-the-Hill, Stanmore, the Essex marshes, Chiselhurst, and Sundridge have been reconnoitred. The chalk hills of Kent, well powdered with adders, have felt the imprint of your bootmaker's patent heel. Bletchingley, Dorking, and all that lovely country has so delighted a pictorial instinct that you dread an anticlimax. You must range farther afield. But where? And how?

We will endeavour for a brief space to act as your cicerone, promising you a treat such as cannot be obtained south of the Trent, and at no very colossal expenditure either of shoe-leather or income. We must de rigueur bargain for a cloudless day. Du reste, the season matters little. If you prefer greenwood, select spring or summer; if orange or red foliage, autumn; if white with the weird mystery of fairyland, the rime of winter. It is all and always beautiful; and withal so silent, grand, and old-world, that but for the evenness of the roads you might fancy yourself back again in the Middle Ages.

Forward then. You take a ticket for Reading, either from Paddington or Waterloo—it is quite immaterial. Get over the railway business as early as you conveniently can, but by all means feed to the very full before leaving the hospitable town where biscuits are manufactured, for the Chilterns are not reliable in the matter of provender. These preliminaries settled, you cross Caversham bridge, and find yourself in the classic county of Oxford, a pilgrim of landscape.

Toiling up Caversham Hill with a ghastly chalk-pit on one side, and a Stoke-Pogis-looking old church on the other, you begin to realise the graceful undulations of the Chiltern Range. The neighbourhood of Reading being eligible for building sites, land-owners seem to have purposely deformed its natural beauty by cutting down the In less than a mile, however, you escape from this bare-The road first becomes a picturesque avenue. Then you remark that the woods close in on your path, like the Russian cannon at Balaklava, to the right and left. At last you are fairly immersed in the beech woods, and can imagine vourself Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, or, if in a loftier vein, Sir Gawain on a wildgoose quest. We term this tract of country, in accordance with its own modest pretension, the beech woods. It would be, however, far more accurate to designate it forest; for a noble forest it is, stretching from Whitchurch, opposite Pangbourne, right away to Stokenchurch in Buckinghamshire, its greatest latitude being about eight miles, between Henley and Nuffield. The soil is for the most part chalk and flint, with oases of gravel. The population is abnormally sparse; but the pheasants and hares, being much the reverse, attract gangs of poschers, whose nocturnal enterprise helps to supply Leadenhall Market.

The first place of consideration you pass along the road is Cane End, the seat of H. Vanderstegen, Esq., who has inherited the acres of the Brighams, an ancient and honourable county family. If you were Sir Boyle Roche's bird, and could be in two places at once, you might, without severe locomotion, catch a glimpse of Hardwick, a genuine Elizabethan mansion, the property of Mr. Powys-Lybbe, the representative of another good old stock; or of Blount's Court, so called after the Blounts, who still adhere to their ancient habitation, and moreover to the ancient faith. In fact Chilternia is covered with armigerous falk, who have never made up their mind to sell manorial rights, which every fresh decade become more and more prized and precious.

From Cane End—still following our guidance—you walk through a leafy paradise to Woodcota, where you get a peep of the grim Berkshire Downs and the White Horse Range. From thence, a short half mile, to Checkenden, a handsome church of Norman outline, containing a splendid mediæval brass of Sir E. Rede.

Having satisfied your archeological lust, if you have any, Shanks his mare is gently spurred, and you march off to Scots Common, the loveliest spot, beyond a doubt, in this line of territory. To call it a common seems a mere façon de parler. It is indeed a golconda of greenery, such a bit of perfect foreground as would rejoice the heart of Mr. Vicat Cole. At the entrance of the farmyard abutting on the common stands the shell of a giant oak, planted, at a guess, by some Saxon ere ever Bassett the Norman constituted himself lord paramount of these hundreds, or Marmyon, the king's cup-bearer, to be afterwards immortalised in poetry, perhaps by virtue of his euphonious name, cribbed the adjoining liberty of Stoke.

Passing by the Ipsden woods, second to none in density and variety of foliage, you come upon a queer three-cornered plot, styled the 'Devil's Churchyard.' The monks, so runs the legend, had a fancy to remove Ipsden Church, which lies two miles west in the valley, and they did actually commence a new edifice on this very spot. Mephistopheles, however—who we suspect was a Norman of the Bassett variety—took what there was of the new church bodily, and popped it down in its present position. Hereabouts, if you could only reproduce the legends destroyed during the wild excesses of the Reformation, would be found plenty of historiettes of older England. For, on the adjoining promontory of hill-land called Berrins Hill, after St. Birinus, founder of Dorchester Abbey eight miles distant along the Oxford road, was a Roman station, the present evidence whereof is a well, whereunto, as they say, hangs a tale.

Some years back an ill-starred girl of the hamlet lying under the hill, which is styled Well Place, flung her baby down this shaft. A woodman, passing by accidentally, was attracted by the child's cries, and, procuring assistance, succeeded in extracting it uninjured. It had fallen upon the soft springy brushwood at the bottom, and was hardly bruised. Of course, the moment this Ginx's baby got into the papers, a mighty pother was created; and multifarious were the philanthropists who, though they would not have given a bawbee to the poor erring frenzied mother to help over the shame—which surely was not ALL hers—volunteered to adopt, educate, endow, and work wonders for the child. Poor little soul! it saved them the trouble and cost, by retiring to a world where, let us hope, sinners come off better than in our over-righteous community, and saints get their deserts—whatever they may be.

No marvel that Birinus pitched his tent in view of this splendid panorama—rivalled only perhaps by the delicious view of the Otmoor vale from the altitude of Elsfield. Before you lies the valley of the Thames, meandering by Goring, Moulsford, Mongewell, or St. Mungo's Well—wells in this district were of yore more

prized than rubies-Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Bensington. In the farthest distance range the Cotswolds, a bleak desolate region, with Cumnor Hurst, like a tall sentry guarding their van. To the left behind the river towers Streatly Hill, whilst in the foreground beneath your feet nestles the exquisite village of Ipsden, the birthplace of Charles Reade; and apart, in solitary dignity, the lowly parish-church, where lies buried his gifted and adventurous nephew, who tempted the African desert just once too often. Well, if Shanks be not tired with this nine miles of easy strolling, amid the purest of pure atmosphere, you can right-about-face, and walk back, viâ Stoke Row and Witheridge Hill, to Henley-on-Thames, whence the Great Western Railway will convey your carcass townwards; or, if you prefer a briefer route, strike across country to Goring Station. At Henley, however, we can promise you the excellent hospitality of the Red Lion; whereas Goring—a sweet spot for fishing—does not offer the delicacies of Lucullus, or, indeed, aught edible, except bread-and-cheese.

It would be easy to gush about the beauties of the path we have traversed. It would be impossible in the slender circumference of diction to do them the scantiest justice. Every ten yards you have a fresh picture, the framework whereof is greenery, the details, including ferns and wild flowers, luxuriating in surpassing wealth. There you may hear the song of small birds—the gold-finch, bullfinch, linnet, as well as the coo of the dove and the cry of the jay. The very smell of the mighty woods is sweet with such a divine fragrance as the Bond-street people would sell their souls to imitate. Above all, thank Heaven! your fellow-creatures, with all their malice, and patronage, and mendacity, and alternated grovelling and rudeness, are absent. Hence the sweetness of the air, which is that of Eden.



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#### ON THE SEABOARD

Draw back the curtain; see the bar is safe;
How the old cottage quivers to the blast!
Look how the wild waves on the headlands chafe,
And the black clouds drive onwards, fierce and fast.
The white surf boils upon the rocky strand;
Pray God no ship is driving to the land!

How the blue lightning dazzles! in its flare
I saw poor Mary crouching in her nook;
Its lurid brightness lit her tossing hair
And all the strange intentness of her look.
Ten years ago the Rose was lost, you know,
And still she keeps her dreary vigil so.

'A shatter'd wreck,' you call her; she we named
Our seaside Pearl, our blue-eyed, rose-lipp'd pride,
Ere girlish loveliness shrank, marr'd and shamed,
When death and madness met it, side by side.
Sweetheart and brother drown'd together lay,
When the Rose founder'd, out there in the Bay.

Yonder she watch'd, in impotent despair,
The rocket fail, the life-boat driven back,
Till dying shrieks were shrilling through the air,
And the huge billows rolling, fierce and black,
Drove the good ship on to her headlong doom,
And thunder'd o'er the sailors' wandering tomb.

She says that voices whisper in the waves,
When moon and tide at full and flow are met,
And tell her, down among the coral caves,
Her lover lives and loves and waits her yet:
'When storm and wind break through his chain, he'll keep
The tryst he made at foot of Runswick Steep.'

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So when the tempest wakens in the North,
And all the air thrills with the ocean roar,
Its summons calls her from the ingle forth,
To watch for Willie on the sounding shore;
To stretch weak arms and tire aching eyes
To greet her Love, at last allow'd to rise.

Poor child, the great waves thunder to her feet,
The lighthouse beacon flashes through the dark;
The 'wilder'd brain's delusion, sad and sweet,
Gives life's one brightness, like yon saving spark.
Well, close the curtains, there's no sail in sight;
God guard the mariners at sea to-night!

S. K. PHILLIPS.

#### BACHELOR BEN'

Some three years ago I was a severe sufferer from chronic impecu-I occupied at this time the responsible but by no means lucrative position of second master in a London day-school; and as my income from this its only source amounted to something less than sixty pounds per annum, it may be readily surmised that I found it a matter of some difficulty to keep the wolf from the door. Indeed in my particular case the joining of the proverbial two ends was a task of Herculean dimensions, and one which I should never have had the courage to tackle but for the fact of my daily living in hopes of 'something turning up.' My only consolation was that I had not to work particularly hard for my pittance, but had plenty of leisure time on my hands, and I at length awoke to the conviction that I certainly ought to try and secure some extra employment for the unoccupied hours at my disposal. No sooner had this idea entered my mind than I proceeded to act upon it, and for the next few weeks I did my very utmost to attain the end I I entered my name at three agencies, consulted inhad in view. fuential friends in all quarters, answered innumerable advertisements culled from the morning papers; in fact, left no stone unturned in order to bring in the required extra grist to the mill.

About this time I went one night to a bachelor's party, and while returning therefrom with a friend, who lived in the same direction as myself, I unbosomed myself to him concerning my pelf-lacking condition.

He at once proceeded to advise me thus:

'Why, my good sir,' he exclaimed, 'don't you turn your comicsong writing powers to some account? Those things you sang to-night were your own, were they not?'

I replied in the affirmative.

'Well, then,' said he, 'I'm surprised you don't try and sell some of them to the music-hall singers: they'd jump to buy them of you. Look at the stuff they're obliged to put up with. You'd get a guinea or two for every one of yours, if you only went the right way to work. There's a wrinkle for you, my dear fellow: carry it out.'

Now I must candidly admit that I entertained at this period a very high opinion of my comic-song-writing abilities. I had tested my effusions at private parties and at Penny Readings, and as they had always turned up trumps, I saw no reason why they should not

be equally successful on the music-hall stage. Hence I caught eagerly at my friend's suggestion. A guinea a song! and I could easily write half-a-dozen a week. Phew! it fairly made my mouth water to think of it. But—and here came the rub—how were the said guineas to be secured? I knew next to nothing of music-halls and the singers who figured therein, and my friend had admitted that he was in this last respect no better off than myself. What, then, was to be done? How was I to get my concoctions laid before those 'comiques' who might be disposed to purchase them? I hit upon and thought over a good many schemes to bring about this much-desired result, but all seemed likely to prove equally ineffectual. At last I came to the conclusion that I would not depend upon my own resources in the matter, but would take counsel's opinion, i.e. go to some person familiar with the question, and faithfully follow out the course which he should suggest.

Now, having determined to ask advice on the subject, the question was to whom should I make application. One who had written accepted comic ditties would alone be worth consulting, but unfortunately I did not number among my acquaintances any such lucky individual. At last I bethought me that I was on speaking terms with a Mr. Tom Rogers, a gentleman who occupied the post of chairman at the Rutland Music-Hall. He must, I argued, having filled this position for many years, be well acquainted, not only with comic-song singers, but also with those who concocted the productions which they sang. I could not, I felt assured, do better than apply to him, if not for actual advice, at any rate for an introduction to some one competent to give it.

Accordingly, a few nights after I had thought of Mr. Rogers, I made my way to his table at the Rutland, and was lucky enough to meet with a vacant seat thereat.

Mr. Rogers, a stout burly man, with a red face and a bald head, was at this juncture in the full swing of his business. He was smoking an enormous cigar, and having knocked down the lady professional who had just quitted the stage for another song, he was in the act of finishing what had once been a jorum of whisky hot. I seized upon this golden opportunity, and almost before I had done exchanging greetings with Mr. Rogers, I had ordered a waiter to replenish the empty glass. He was now mine as long as the tumbler lasted, so, the sun shining, I lost no time in making my hay. In the intervals of the performance I put my case to Mr. Rogers, and requested the benefit of his experience.

'You could not do better,' said he, when I had finished, 'than apply to Frank Redmond—he's the very man you want; if your songs are worth anything, which I should suppose from what I know of you that they are' (here Mr. Rogers took a hearty pull at his whisky), 'he will compose melodies for them, and then dispose

of them for you. He happens to be here to-night; he came to hear Kate Mellish sing that song, "Rainbow Nell," which she has just given; that's his music. You had better see him at once; he is one of the first writers and composers of the day. There he is, that tall fellow with the moustache and pea-jacket, standing against the supper-room bar."

'But,' I remonstrated, 'I don't know him; who'll introduce—'

'A glass of ale or three of Irish warm will,' said Mr. Rogers. 'In any case of introduction to a member of the music-hall profession, whether male or female, the best M.C.—in fact the M.C.—is a drinkable congenial to the taste of the person whose acquaint-ance is sought. You try Redmond; he'll do the business for you.'

And here Mr. Rogers, finishing his whisky at a gulp, telegraphed an invitation for his table to a friend whom he perceived struggling through the labyrinth of the stalls. I proceeded to the supper-room, and for a short time occupied myself in taking stock of Mr. Redmond.

He was a lanky individual, about thirty years of age, and as to his aspect, of unquestionable seediness. He was just then engaged in an animated discussion with a gentleman whose blackened face showed that he was in the 'nigger' line of business. Mr. Redmond, I noticed, kept his back as close as possible to the barcounter; this peculiarity on his part, coupled with the fact that he ever and anon gave his rather short pea-jacket a downward jerk, led me to the conclusion that those of his garments which we never mention were not well fitted for gaslight inspection.

In the course of a few minutes the negro gentleman took his departure, and then I made my approaches.

'I suppose, Mr. Redmond,' said I, 'that you wrote "Rainbow Nell" expressly for Miss Mellish?'

'Yes,' replied he at once, 'yes; how did you like it? Think it went down well? My music and words too.'

'I thought it went capitally,' said I. 'I like the chorus very much, it's sure to become popular; but I'm just going to refresh the inner man—will you join me?'

'With pleasure,' exclaimed Mr. Redmond promptly. 'I'll take a drop of pale brandy warm. You haven't got any tobacco about you, have you? I find I've left my pouch at home.'

I tendered my pouch, and the ordered liquor appearing, Mr. Redmond waxed animated and confidential, and our acquaintance progressed apace.

After plying him with another 'three penn'orth,' I proceeded to business.

I told him, quite in a casual way, that I had written a comic song, which I was vain enough to fancy ought to be sung, and I should esteem it a favour if he would cast his eyes over it, and in-

form me, if he thought it worth its salt, what steps I should take in order to get it mated to a melody and produced.

Here I unpocketed and handed him one of my best effusions,

which I had baptised 'Bachelor Ben.'

'I'll look over it with pleasure,' said Mr. Redmond; 'but let's go into the billiard-room, we shall be quieter there.'

I assented, of course, and Mr. Redmond, giving a preliminary

and extra-vigorous tug at his 'pea,' led the way.

'It's not a bad song,' said he, when he had read it over; 'not a bad song by any means; the third verse is first-rate, and the words of the chorus good. Now I tell you what I'll do. I'll write you a melody for it, and then I think I can sell it to Jim Villars, if he'll give anything worth taking for it. You and I'll go halves; and then if afterwards we can sell it to a music-publisher, we'll share what we make by it there again. I'll find a pretty tune for it, you may depend. When shall I see you again? Can you meet me here this day week? If you can, I'll have the melody ready by then, and you can come to my place and hear it played. I live quite close to here.'

Overjoyed at my good fortune, I at once promised to meet Mr. Redmond on the day he named, and after some further conversa-

tion on the subject I wished him good-night.

I walked home that evening in a delightful state of anticipation. 'I thought,' said I to myself, 'that a song like that ought to be snapped up. I felt certain it had only to be seen to be appreciated, and now I find I was quite right. Redmond will compose a catching tune for it, no doubt, and will soon find some one to sing it; then, once having a song of mine brought out, I shall have no difficulty in disposing of others. How stupid of me not to have thought of this source of income before!'

Such were my reflections on my homeward walk, and such did they continue to be until the eventful evening when I was to meet Mr. Redmond. Long before the appointed hour, I betook myself to the Rutland. The time arrived, but no Mr. Redmond put in an appearance. I inquired for him at the bar, and was told that he could not possibly be there that night, as he had to take the chair at an-

other hall on the Surrey sitle of the water.

My feelings at this intelligence cannot be described, but I was speedily restored to my former state of mind by the information that Mr. Redmond had left a message for me; this being to the effect that he was very sorry that he could not keep his appointment, but that he hoped to see me at his house the following morning.

The next day being Saturday, I proceeded at about twelve o'clock to the somewhat dingy street in which Mr. Redmond resided.

I was informed by the slip-shod girl who answered the door that Mr. Redmond was at home, and that if I made application at the third-

floor back I should meet with the object of my search. 'Mr. Redmond expects you,' said the damsel, 'and left word as you was to walk up.'

I mounted the stairs accordingly, and knocking at the door to which I had been directed, a voice, which I recognised as Mr. Redmond's, bade me enter.

The room in which I found myself was an uncommonly ramshackle, dirty little den. It was sparsely furnished, and what few things were in it presented a remarkably patriarchal appearance. They were evidently of no relation to one another, but had clearly been members of as many different households. There was first an ancient piano, which, from its battered and rickety appearance, seemed as though it had done good yeomanry service in its day and genera-Near to it was a washing-stand, in such an alarming state of decrepitude that its delf had been taken from it, and placed, for safety's sake, on a large box stuck up on end. Two out of the four chairs had, it could not be doubted, seen better days; and as for the feeble chest-of-drawers, it bore upon its surface the stamp of patrician birth: its attitude, though palsied, was full of dignity, and it was clearly bent upon keeping up appearances to the last. floor was entirely innocent of carpet, but as it was, over the whole of its surface, copiously spotted with ink, it seemed as though it were in mourning for the last bit of Kidderminster with which it had been clothed. In one corner was a tall stack of music, and against that side which faced the window stood a small iron bedstead, the brown-coloured sheets, &c., of which were but scantily veiled by the ragged counterpane that had been hurriedly drawn over them. the centre of the apartment was a large table, and on this was the most singular assortment of articles that had ever met my gaze at one and the same time. There was an ink-pot and a pair of newlymended boots, a pan full of potatoes, a looking-glass, razor and hairbrush, two or three books, and a walking-stick. On a small tray in the middle stood a cup and saucer and a plate; this latter evidently contained the remains of Mr. Redmond's matutinal meal, viz. the fragments of a loaf and the skeleton of a red-herring. Near this tray was a lamp, a woman's workbox, and a playbill, while a little farther on could be espied a small carpet-bag, a pair of elastic garters, a pot of pomade, a paper of tobacco, two clay-pipes, and a gridiron. Not far from this well-laden board was seated a poorly-dressed but rather pretty young woman, whom Mr. Redmond introduced to me as his better-half. She was busily engaged in repairing some garments which bore suspicious resemblance to those which Mr. Redmond had endeavoured to veil with his pea-jacket on the occasion of our first meeting. Mr. Redmond himself I found pacing up and down the room in a dirty dressing-gown, a doubled-up sheet of paper in his hand, and a large pen cocked behind his ear. He was evidently in the throes of literary birth.

'I am sorry,' said he, 'that you should have had to pay me a visit in such a place as this, but' (placing a chair for me near the fire) 'literature has still its ups and downs, and the nineteenth as well as the eighteenth century possesses its Grub-street. One week we regale ourselves with moselle and champagne, the next it's a case of four-ale and—and—' (perceiving my eye directed towards the table) 'red-herring. But to business. Well, I've done your song, and I think you'll like the tune; let's see what you think of it.'

And Mr. Redmond, going up to his old piano, dashed off a not by any means bad melody; and when he proceeded to sing my words, it certainly sounded to me one of the most masterly tunes I had ever listened to.

'There!' he exclaimed, when he had gone through the song and played over the air several times, 'what's your opinion of it?'

I expressed myself intensely delighted with the music, and when, with pipes lighted, we seated ourselves before the fire, I eagerly questioned him as to the probabilities of the song being sold.

'Well,' said he, puffing away at his pipe, 'I mean to offer it first of all to Fred Bell—I think he's in want of something of the kind just at present; if he won't take it, I'll try Joe Brydges; but if I don't dispose of it immediately, I'm sure to do so before long: my words and melodies always go off.'

'You've written and composed a good many songs in your time,

I suppose?' said I.

Well, yes,' replied Mr. Redmond, smiling; 'I've been at it now nearly nine years, and I've brought out upwards of three thousand songs, ballads, and duologues. I generally do one a day, and I've published over thirty of my songs.'

'Do you find it an avocation that pays?' I asked.

'Well, sometimes it does, but oftener it doesn't. I should never be able to get a living in London alone, you know; it's my extensive connection in the provinces that keeps me going. Sometimes I get a dozen orders at a time for songs, and then I make an invariable charge of a guinea for the words, or two guineas for words and music combined; always reserving, mind, to myself the right of publishing. should the song prove a hit. Publishing, you must understand, is the most profitable part of the business; for when I dispose of a song, I never take less than four pounds, and I have received as much as ten pounds. Sometimes, again, I don't sell a thing right out, but merely copies of it; and under these circumstances I charge five shillings for words and music. I've often upwards of a dozen people singing a song of mine at the same time. Just at present, however, I'm rather down upon my luck; in fact I've done next to nothing in the music-hall line lately, but have gone into the advertisement business.'

'I beg pardon,' said I, 'but what's that?'



'Why, the pushing tradesman's poetic puff business, to be sure,' said Mr. Redmond. 'There are scores of shopkeepers who advertise their wares in rhymes, and of course they have to get some one to do this for them. It's astonishing what a lot of this work there is about, and there's actually competition in it as well. I know at the present time two or three East-end tradesmen who have piles of manuscripts sent into them for inspection, just as if they were the editors of popular magazines. But talking is a thirst-producing occupation: suppose we have some beer?'

I assented, and handing Mrs. Redmond a shilling, she departed in search of the required fluid. When she had returned, and the liquor was consumed, I took my departure, Mr. Redmond promising that he would let me know when 'Bachelor Ben' was disposed of.

Days passed by and weeks glided on, but I received no communication from Mr. Redmond. At last I called upon him, and found that he had just gone into the country for a month to deputise for a provincial chairman. The month and another fortnight having expired, I called again. This time, the landlord in person answered the door, and in response to my inquiries, exclaimed,

'Redmond! no; I don't know nothing about him, and I only wish I did; he ain't paid no rent for the last two months, and I don't expect we shall clap eyes on him again; he's left nothing behind but his blooming piano, and that ain't worth three o' gin cold. You tell him, if you see him, that I'll break his blessed neck when I catch him next.'

So saying, the burly landlord banged the door in my face. This was pleasant, but still I did not despair. Mr. Redmond's pecuniary difficulties had nothing to do with me or my song. I would inquire for him at the Rutland. I did so, but was told that he had not been seen there for weeks past. 'It's very strange he shouldn't come, you know, sir,' said my informant—a waiter at the establishment—with a knowing grin; 'for he's got one or two good friends here who are particularly anxious to see him just at present. There's William, for instance, the waiter who's in the saloon, and Tom the billiard-marker; it's astonishing the affectionate manner in which they're always asking after him. He—tankard of ale, sir, yes, sir.' And away went the waiter.

'This is a confounded nuisance,' I muttered, as I walked away from the hall. 'What on earth shall I do to find the fellow?' I had hardly given vent to this remark when I ran bang into the arms of the very man of whom I was in search.

'Hallo!' he cried, 'how are you this long time? I was thinking of writing to you to-morrow, for young Seaton says he'll take our song and pay us a guinea for it. I've been in the country for some time past, or I should have sold it before. He's going to meet me next Saturday morning at Johnny Moses's, the composer's, to

hear me play over the tune and practise it. Can you come down?

I asked where Mr. Moses lived.

Redmond replied that he resided in the vicinity of Seven Dials, and that if I would meet him at the corner of Oxford-street, Tottenham-court-road, at eleven o'clock, we could walk to Mr. Moses's house together.

I assented to this proposal, and met Mr. Redmond as arranged. Walking down the Dials, we turned up a street leading therefrom, and came presently to a large fried-fish shop. To the right of this was a wide passage, the huge caken door of which was open. On the doorpost was a small brass plate bearing the inscription, 'Mr. John Moses, Professor of Music.' Entering this passage, we mounted a flight of steps at the end of it, and speedily found ourselves on the first landing.

Mr. Redmond knocked at a door close to the stair-head, and a shrill voice requesting us to come in, we walked into a kind of kitchen, where an old woman, surrounded by a bevy of noisy children, was engaged in some domestic occupation.

'Johnny at home?' inquired Mr. Redmond, jerking his thumb

towards a closed door on the left.

'I should think you could hear he is,' was the somewhat contemptuous reply; and, to judge from the extraordinary compound of sounds, vocal and instrumental, which proceeded from the other side of the door in question, some one certainly was at home, and to some purpose in the bargain.

Opening this door, we found ourselves in a big barnlike apart-

ment, which looked on the street.

This room was remarkable for anything but cleanliness, and was furnished after a very bizarre fashion. Two huge wooden bedsteads stood against the back wall, while on the side facing the fireplace there were two pianos, placed lovingly cheek by jowl. Three deal tables, entirely coverless and arranged tandem fashion, occupied the middle of the room, and on one side of these was a rough carpenter's bench. A few crazy chairs and a box or two were here and there to be observed; but nothing in the shape of carpet, hearthrug, or window-curtains. A few portraits of music-hall stars were hung immediately above the pianos, while over the fireplace was a large framed engraving containing the titles of fifty of Mr. Moses's published songs, with the likenesses of the artistes who had sung them.

So much for the room; now for its occupants.

Perched on a stool before one of the pianos was an elderly gentleman, whom I afterwards found to be Mr. Moses. He was playing a thundering accompaniment to a young lady, who warbled a music-hall ditty with all the lung-power at her command. Close behind her was another young lady (somewhat stout), who, in

tucked-up skirts and a profuse perspiration, was receiving a dancinglesson from a tall lathy biped, armed with a long clay-pipe. the other side of the table two gentlemen of decidedly professional cut were engaged in a fencing-match; one wielded a thick stick. and the other Mr. Moses's poker, and, as far as I could see, they were going through that extraordinary exercise known as the 'Robbers' Cuts.' At the back of the room, and seated on one of the beds before alluded to, was a youth, who, from his strong likeness to the gentleman at the piano, I conjectured to be his son. He was exceedingly diminutive in stature, and wore an 'Ulster' at least six sizes too large for him. He contributed his quota to the general uproar by playing on the trombone till his face was fairly in flames with exertion. Leaning over one of the tables was another young fellow (his brother apparently), clad in a twin 'Uster,' and busily engaged in writing the band parts of a song lying before him. Near him was seated a buxom dame, occupied in covering a ballet-dancer's shoe with amber satin; while a third young lady, evidently the owner of the said shoe, was standing behind her, and laying down the law about something pertaining to it in an exceedingly high key. Two or three other people were also present, talking and laughing at the tip-top of their voices; so that the combined din from them, the dancing-master, the piano, and the trombone, was absolutely deafening.

At last, however, there came a lull. Mr. Moses and young lady No. 1 finished their song, and the dancing instructor and his pupil, knocking off at the same time, betook themselves eagerly to some drinkables on the table: the gentleman patronising a pot of porter, the lady a little neat gin proffered her by the buxom dame with the satin shoe, who I found was Mrs. Moses. Soon after, the trombone player struck work, so that Mr. Redmond was enabled to exchange greetings with all present, and to introduce me to Mr. Moses.

Mr. Moses was a short squat personage, with strongly-marked Jewish features, and was very nearly, though not quite, as broad as he was long. He was dressed in a pair of black trousers, through which he had thrust his little bow legs considerably too far, a ragged old night-shirt, and a black swallow-tailed coat, split half way up the back. This 'get-up' certainly struck me as singularly ill-adapted for the imposing morning levée which I found him holding.

While chatting to him, in walked Mr. Seaton, and, after a few preliminaries, we adjourned to the piano, and Mr. Redmond played and sung over our song. Fortunately the room was pretty clear by this time, so that Mr. Seaton had a fair chance of hearing what the music was like.

He expressed himself highly pleased with both words and air, but said that he could not give a decided answer as regarded purchasing the song until the end of the next week. Having arranged

that he should communicate his decision to Mr. Redmond, and that this worthy should apprise me of the same, our conference broke up.

But, as before, weeks passed by, and I received no intelligence whatever. At length I called on him at the new address he had given me, but found that he had no satisfactory intelligence to communicate. Mr. Seaton, I found, had after much haggling finished up by declining to purchase the song. Mr. Redmond had since made application to several other professionals, but with the like disappointing result. But still he felt certain that music and words were worthy of pelf, and assured me that if I would only have patience 'Bachelor Ben' was bound to be produced in the end.

After this interview with Mr. Redmond I saw but little of him for about six months. I came across him occasionally, it is true, but our intercourse was of the slenderest description, and consisted almost entirely of questions respecting 'Bachelor Ben' on my part,

and disappointment-producing replies on his.

At last, about a year after I had first made his acquaintance, I received a note from him, informing me that he had disposed of the song to a Mr. Sam Brunel, who was at that time fulfilling an engagement at the Phormio. 'Bachelor Ben' would in all probability be sung by him in a week or so's time.

This epistle fanned the almost-expiring embers of my expectations again into full flame, and I now began to be really convinced

that my song was near its birth.

Waiting three weeks, I proceeded, brimful of hope, to the Phormio, and securing a stall, I awaited impatiently for Mr. Brunel's appearance. At last his name was announced by the chairman, and the orchestra struck up a symphony, but it was not that of 'Bachelor Ben.' The song was finished, and again did the orchestra play, but still not what I panted to hear. This was the case a third time, then a fourth, and finally Mr. Brunel made his farewell bow for the night. Intensely disgusted, I made my way to the bar and waited for him to come out. At length he emerged from the stage-door, and pushed his way to where I was disconsolately standing. I introduced myself to him, and inquired when he intended to sing my song.

'Well,' replied he, 'I intended doing so before now; but I've got such a lot of new things in hand just at present; however, I mean to bring it out as soon as I can. Drop in again in a week or

two; I daresay I shall be working it by then.'

I did drop in in a week or two, but my song was still unsung. I felt so savage this time that I made no attempt to see Mr. Brunel, and walked home hurling anathemas at the head of every comic singer under the sun. Still I did not entirely abandon hope, for in a month's time I again presented myself at the scene of Mr. Brunel's labours. His 'turn' arrived, but a dashing young.

lady tripped on to the stage in his stead. I inquired the meaning of this, and was informed that Mr. Brunel was unwell, and that the dashing young lady was deputising for him. Another week came and went, and then I wended my way to the Phormio for the fourth time. Mr. Brunel did appear on this occasion, but still my song was mheard. This was too much, so I waited for him as before at the bar.

'O,' said he, when he saw me; 'come about "Bachelor Ben," I suppose?' Well, I'm really very sorry that I've not been able to bring it out as yet; still I hope to do so in about ten days. Look here, give me your address, and I'll let you know the first night I sing it.'

I handed my card to Mr. Brunel, and he, on wishing me goodnight, assured me that before a fortnight was over my song should

be in full swing.

I had been so often disappointed that I did not pay so much heed to this promise as I otherwise should have done; but, about a fortnight having elapsed, I actually heard from him to the effect that he was going to sing 'Bachelor Ben' for the first time on the

following Wednesday.

It is needless to state that I journeyed to the Phormio betimes on that eventful Wednesday night. I got there shortly after the doors opened, and before entering the hall, I walked into the front bar to have a look at the evening paper. Here, to my great surprise, I found quite a crowd assembled, and in the centre of it no less a personage than Mr. Sam Brunel. He was dressed in a brandnew suit of clothes and a large white hat, had half a dozen rings on his fingers, and was most emphatically three sheets in the wind. He was propped up against the bar-counter, and was actively engaged in tossing cigars to all assembled from an open box in his hand. Champagne and sherry bottles loaded the counter, and 'liquoring up' on a most extensive scale was going on on all sides.

I asked the meaning of what I saw.

The answer came from Mr. Brunel, whose eye at this juncture

lighted upon me.

'Hallo!' he roared, 'how are you, old son? What are you going to have? Call for any mortal thing you like; I can pay for it. My uncle Jim's just dead, and left me twenty thousand quid. What do you think of that, eh? You won't catch me singing any of your mouldy comic songs any more. I pitched all the blooming band parts into the fire this morning; but never you mind that, old cock. What'll you take to drink? Give it a name.'

This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. I drank Mr. Brunel's health in one glass of champagne, accepted a cigar, and then, going straight home, I solemnly consigned my solitary

copy of 'Bachelor Ben' to the flames.

R. V. CHILCOTT.

# THE FAIR AT MAGANGUY

As Egypt is to the United States of Colombia, so is the fair at Tantah to that at Maganguy. Every one who has anything to sell, and every one who wishes to buy, assembles there, and is accompanied by the crowd of gamblers, mountebanks, and other vagabonds to be met with at such gatherings wherever they may be held. As the people of Colombia are, perhaps, the most prosaic—not to put too fine a point upon it—in the world, the objects bought and sold at Maganguy are, for the most part, of first necessity. Nevertheless, it is a sight to see; and the present writer is, perhaps, the first 'chiel' who has gone thither with the simple purpose of 'taking a note o't.'

The town of Maganguy is situated on the River Cauca, shortly after its junction with the Magdalena, and differs little from its fellows throughout the interior of Colombia except in this, that the row of houses fronting the river are built of stone. These are let to the merchants who attend the fair. The dwellings in the back streets are the usual wattle-walled palm-leaf-thatched hovels; the slightest spark is sufficient to set them in a blaze; but, by some special interposition of Providence, the natives are permitted to light their cooking-fires in the centre of their one living-room with impunity. Fires have broken out at Maganguy during fair time, and the riot, robbery, and loss have been most disastrous.

From Carthagena, St. Martha, and Barranquilla—chiefly from the latter—merchants arrive with dry goods, liquors, guns, and ammunition. From all parts of the interior arrive natives with indiarubber, hides, tobacco, and gold-dust. Great is the buying and selling by day—the gambling and dancing by night; but as the chief 'fun of the fair' is the journey thither, permit me to commence at the commencement.

The River Magdalena is navigated by steamers on the American principle, but not with American accommodation; you have no cabin or berth; you must hang your hammock or spread your mat where you can, and look sharp after it, or you will find it occupied before dark. The monkey-house in the Zoological Gardens at feeding-time is the only sight which in any way approaches what you may behold on board a Barranquilla steamer during breakfast or dinner. There are, perhaps, two hundred passengers, and the table will accommodate forty. As soon as the cloth is removed a select party sits down to vingt-et-un, and play until it is time to lay it again or to put the lights out. The rest sit round the deck, smoke, and talk scandal against each other.

It was not, however, via Barranquilla that this 'chiel' went to

Maganguy. He went through the Digue (Anglice, ditch), a series of lakes—salt and fresh water—connected by canals, partly natural partly artificial, in all about 120 miles long-which connect the splendid Bay of Carthagena with the Magdalena at Calamar. There can be but little doubt but that this river had a mouth at one time not far from Carthagena; the Spaniards availed themselves of the water-way that was left, and made the Digue. The Colombians, having gained their independence, became too busy cutting each other's throats to attend to such prosaic things, and the ditch became blocked up, to be opened again after some thirty years by an American, who made a new cut into the river; but, not allowing sufficient outfall for flood-water, found his whole work destroyed, and the valley through which it passed inundated, after a brief interval of success. For many years efforts have been made to reopen the Digue; but unfortunately the concessions have been given to men of straw, and as Colombia has produced little of late except revolutions, foreign capitalists fought shy of her. When she did obtain a competent commissioner, she hastened to put a spoke in his wheel. In a certain August, however, a steamer of the long-talkedabout 'Digue Company' made her appearance at Carthagena, and it was in her that the 'chiel' went to Maganguy.

Her name was the Meddelin: she was of 240 tons' (American measurement) burden, and drew four feet of water. Our first adventure was sticking fast in a tree: pulling away its branches, we found oysters, which we ate for dinner. Oysters growing on trees! A steamer of 240 tons caught in a tree! Impossible. Facts, if you please. The Digue, at the spot in question, made a sharp turn, and was barely twenty yards wide. The tree was a mangrove, whose branches have excrescences like forked ropes, which grow down into the water, and to which a small but palatable bivalve clings. Later on we steamed for three hours apparently through a large cabbage-garden. Looking ahead, there was not as much water to be seen as would float a duckling. We were in a tapon. What is a 'tapon'? Tapa in Spanish is a cork, or let us say a bung, and the word 'tapon' cannot be better translated than by using the slang phrase 'bunged up' (place understood). Tapon is, therefore, a place bunged up by a floating weed, propagated in the fresh-water lakes or cynegas, and rather like a young cabbage. The slightest obstacle masses these together; and when the mud of the Magdalena—muddiest of rivers—clings to their roots and allows them to grow together, the place is indeed 'bunged up.' At one spot the steamer, a stern-wheeler, with an engine of 60-horse power, and going full steam, could not make head against the tapon, but backed and charged ahead-backed and charged ahead for half an hour, in the vain endeavour to break it. It was only by sending men overboard to cut it that we got through. When the tapon is

loose the weeds divide right and left, and a powerful boat has little

difficulty in passing.

The transition from salt to fresh water is marked by the decadence of the mangrove (which in the brackish canals is a tree some sixty feet high, and dwindles down into a mere bush as you go on), the appearance of ferns and bamboos on the banks, and caiman in the stream. In one reach of not more than two miles long the 'chiel' saw at least forty of these saurians, and took a most mean advantage of one monster who was fast asleep, with his mouth open, on a bank. An old stager declared that it was the first time he had seen a caiman shot dead; but this was said. perhaps, to flatter the 'chiel.' Many others were fired at and wounded, more or less severely, with all sorts of arms,-rather less than more, I fancy, as there was only one rifle on board, and revolver bullets at twenty yards only made a little white mark on the creature's scales. Nevertheless, great was the shout of delight at a hit; for caimans, like sharks, get no mercy, and with better excuse, for they are aggressive, which a shark is not unless you intrude upon his domain. He does not come on shore and eat your cows and pigs when they go down to the water to drink. place called Mahates, on the Digue, I am told that they celebrate Holy Thursday by baiting caimans. They catch half a dozen of those ill-fated saurians (how, this deponent sayeth not), drag them to the Plaza, and then worry them to death with blazing palm-leaves.

Ye gentlemen of England who search for new happy huntinggrounds, ye would do well to give the Digue of Carthagena a turn. Besides caimans à discretion, you will not have to go far inland to find jaguars, deer, wild hogs, and a queer creature, half hog half bear. here called ponchas. The waters swarm with splendid and most unsophisticated fish; and of cranes, storks, ducks, teal, curlews, bittern, reed birds, wild turkeys, plovers, flamingoes, pigeon, widgeon, and dozens of other sorts of water-fowl, you may fill a boat full in a few hours. Never have I seen such wealth and diversity of animal life as in the Digue. Besides the birds I have mentioned. you have crowds of macaws of the most brilliant plumage, parrots. and paroquettes. The great trees on the banks are alive with red monkeys. Near Calamar, towards sunset, we saw what appeared to be a monster are in the branches; some one fired at it, and it burst into twelve pieces, each piece a red monkey. It would seem that families sleep together thus, not in each other's arms, but in each other's tails, that prehensile organ serving as the bond of union. I feel sure that a botanist would find plenty to occupy him. The climate is not unhealthy. The explorer must go well armed against mosquitoes, and provided against the nastiness he would have to eat if he relied on local resources for his commissariat.

I cannot say much for the scenery. It is curious at first, but

becomes monotonous by repetition. Passing through some of the cynegas (forgetting for a moment the blazing sun), you might fancy yourself on a lake belonging to some ducal estate in the Midland Counties. The fringe of tapones looks at a distance like a well-kept lawn sloping down to the water's edge; and the ferns, grasses, and shrubs which stud the real bank are disposed in a manner which no Paxton could excel. When you arrive at the scene of the inundation before mentioned, the country is very weird, especially by moonlight. The invading water has killed the trees, and the fierce sun bleached the leafless branches. There they stand—whole forests of them—bare and glittering like skeletons, with huge owls flitting and hooting over their heads.

We had plenty of time for observation as our pilot had the peculiarity of knowing every inch of the way, with the sole exception of the spot upon which about twice a day we stuck hard and fast. When asked where the channel was, he would wave his hand over three parts of a circle, and state that it was 'over there.' When the steamer had been hauled off by sheer force, and the right passage found by sounding from her boats, our Palinurus resumed his station by the wheel-house, quite satisfied with himself and all concerned. There would be no further difficulty now. If he was more than usually confident, we were sure to be on another bank before the hour was passed. In this way we spent two days in the mud, and had to heave forty tons of coal overboard before we could get off. At last we met with a bonga (barge), whose patron undertook to show us the way if we would tow his boat—no slight service when the tapons are considered.

We are now in the narrow waters, and a succession of sharp turns kept all hands on the alert. On one occasion, in spite of a perfect peal of bells in the engine-room, the stream took the steamer's stern, and swept it round majestically upon a huge trunk at least seven feet in diameter, that stuck out of an angle in the bank. We all rushed forward, expecting to see the wheel smashed into splin-The first thing to touch our formidable-looking foe was the light deal railing which supported the after-awning, and that was enough. It was like a trick in a pantomime. The immense bole disappeared in a cloud of dust, and nothing but a few thin flakes of bark floating on the stream remained to show that it had ever existed. The comahen—a white grub, the larva of an ant—had reduced the trunk of that forest tree to powder—all but the bark. If this insect gets into your house, it will do the same thing to your books, all but the covers; to your furniture, all but the surface; to the beams of your roof, all but the outside. One little hole no bigger than the head of a pin lets in the enemy, and he does his work quickly.

At Calamar we joined the Magdalena river, a rapid coffeecoloured stream, about as wide as the Thames at Erith, flowing through a flat and uninteresting country; and on the morning of the sixth day of our voyage arrived at Maganguy. The fair had already begun, and was not, as I was told, a brisk one, owing to a failure of the tobacco and other crops on account of excessive drought. It was brisk enough, however, to give me a sufficient idea of its general quality. All the stone houses before mentioned were full of merchandise, and on the steps of the verandas which shade their doors were seated a crowd of women of every shade, from dingy vellow to lustrous black, selling sugar, onions, garlic, seeds of all sorts, fans, and cakes. Take a carpenter's mallet, split it through handle and block, hang a calabash to the handle end, make notches thereon to represent pounds and half pounds, and you have the engine which still serves these people to weigh their wares. The street is full of itinerant vendors of jewelry (made of native gold at Mompos); hawkers of small wares; clerks hurrying along, with bags of money received of old customers, or to be paid for old scores; beggars; porters carrying bales of hides and tobacco; and the river's bank crowded three deep with every sort of boat, from bongas (barges) of thirty and sixty tons, to the simple canoe, which the proprietor paddles himself as independent as the hero of the popular song. The intermediate vehicle of river-commerce is the champan-a huge tree, hollowed out and covered over with a semicircular roof of cocoa palm-leaves. It is seldom that a bonga can sail against the stream of the Magdalena or Cauca; the champans have no sails: both are poled up by a class of men called bogas (from 'bogar' to push), whose natural history has yet to be written. They are the only men in Colombia who really work for their living; and the work they do, considering the climate in which they do it, is simply stupendous. They are armed each with a pole some thirty feet long, to one extremity of which a fork of hard wood is stoutly lashed. Their working costume consists of a strip of sacking tied round their loins. Their colour is a rich bronze, and their muscular development a model for a new Laocoon. A man new to boging has his left shoulder, against which the pole is pressed, one large bleeding sore; an old hand has there a horny round as hard as a horse's hoof. As they plunge their pole in the water, and tramp, tramp, tramp along the flat gunwale of their boat, they shout a distinctive chant. A practised ear can tell in the night-time whence a bonga comes by the chant of the bogas. Thus from Barranquilla we hear-Yah! ta-ta-ta-ta-ta. From Santa Martha-Yah! yes-s, yes-s, yes-s, yes-s, yes-s. From Carthagena-Yah! ha-ho-hahi, ho-hā-hi, he, ho, hā. The first 'yah' being in all cases a scream.

The boga is paid by the voyage, and what he gains depends upon its length, and the force of the current to be overcome. His average pay is three shillings, a pound of jerked meat, and a dozen plantains a day—and he earns it all. He spends it freely. He is

a gallant man, your boga, and fond of his glass. The quantity of raw rum he can swallow is a cantion. He is very fond of la dance. and his dancing is peculiar. Those who have seen nautch-girls dance in Egypt may form some notion of the style, when I say it is a leetle more suggestive. The ball takes place in the open street, No invitation is required. The band consists of a tom-tom-a slice of a tree hollowed out and covered with a calf's skin-which the performer beats with his hands; when he beats it near the rim it gives out a sharp ringing sound; when struck in the centre, a hollow beom. The tune is Boother-oop-toop ting! boom. Boother-oop-toop ting! boom; da capo. And this will go on from ten or eleven o'clock at night until daybreak. When a boga wishes to pay his attentions to a lady, he presents her, not with a bouquet, but with a pound of sperm candles, which she carries in her hand, all lighted at opce, through the mazy dance; and if her partner is very much in love he buys her as many (mock) silk pocket-handkerchiefs as he has dollars to spare, and burns them in the guttering blaze. Round and round and round go the dancers—the ladies with candles envied by the ladies with none-in solemn silence, for hours and hours, to the monotonous Boöther-cop-toop, ting! boom, of the tomtom.

Not much can be said in favour of the manners of the boga. His language is more forcible than polite. When his bonga gets into an eddy, and his work is thereby lightened, he will substitute for his working-chant impromptus on his passengers, or those of passing boats, in which the one filthy and stupid Spanish expletive occurs every fourth word. It is not good to get into discussions with the boga. I once did so, and only saved myself by remembering a potent spell which I had used with success on the Thames in the days of my youth with a somewhat cognate race—the British bargee. When my bogas had abused me till they were out of breath, I asked to be informed 'Who eat the puppy pie under Marlow Bridge?' I had used the same incantation before with an angry Caiequejee on the Bosphorus, and the result was the same—dumbfoundedness, an awe-struck silence, a paralysis of hand, foot, and tongue, in the midst of which I made good my retreat.

One quality of the boga must not be omitted—his honesty; 'breaking bulk' is a thing unknown. Before the steamers began to ply regularly, millions of dollars in gold-dust and bars went down the Magdalena in bongas unguanded, and I believe there is only one case of robbery on record. He is very fond of gambling, and appears to have faith in the possibility of winning at the numberless games, engines, and contrivances brought together at the fair of Maganguy to relieve him of his hard-earned wages. There is only one fair chance for him if he must gamble, and that is at the roulette tables of Señor M., the largest establishment of the kind at the fair. It occupies the whole of the ground-floor of the best

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house in the town, and is open to all comers; the utmost order prevails; cigars, liquors, and fans are dispensed gratis to habitués by Señor M. with the sweetest of smiles. Nothing puts him out. When there is a run against the bank he is delighted, or seems so. When some rascal tries to cheat him, he admits not discussion; he pays the stake claimed, and orders the claimant out of the room. On the whole he makes a good thing of it—netting, I am told, on an average eight hundred pounds each fair.

To account for the complete absence of anything curious or quaint or beautiful at this fair, it must be repeated that your Colombian is, perhaps, the dullest of created beings. Out of a rather wide acquaintance, I know but one man who has a taste or a pursuit beyond his trade, and this in a country where the student of Nature can pick up in a mile's ride enough objects of beauty and interest to delight him for a month. Nor is this dulness a mere negative quality; people, who would be very angry if spoken of as otherwise than perfectos caballeros (perfect gentlemen), are content to live amidst surroundings of indescribable squalor and ugliness. The traveller may pass through town after town without seeing a flower or the humblest indication of original or poetic thought-no, not even so much as he may find scraped with a stick on the mud-wall of the poorest Arab hovel! A printed cotton dress, long, and consequently more or less draggled, clothes a woman; coarse white trousers and shirt (worn outside), and a black and white straw hat, dress the men of the people. Four wattle walls, with a palm-thatched roof and a floor of mother earth au naturel, house them, their pigs, goats, fowls, and other lesser creatures, with whom they live in common. The men are the same, the dwellings the same, the towns the same—the same dull sodden level everywhere. Indeed, a premium appears to be offered for ugliness. The day has long passed in which beauty of shape or design was inconsistent with cheapness. The commonest clay and glass is 'thrown' or pressed into artistic forms, the poorest calico printed with pretty patterns, for any other country than Colombia. There it must be glaring and rude and ugly, or it will not sell.

Therefore the 'chiel' found no curios at Maganguy, if he excepts the wonderful productions of Frankfort, Hambourg, and Bremen, in imitation of anything that has a name and will sell in this poor country, By 'will sell,' I mean, is wanted. The most palpable deception, the merest rubbish, will sell, so that it be offered cheap. The representative Colombian is not even practical in his dulness: quantity and cheapness are the only considerations which seem to affect him in his buyings. If the gun which he has bought for eight dollars bursts, he will replace it with a cheaper (and more worthless) article, if he can get it. 'Château Lafitte,' at nine and eightpence the case of a dozen, is imported for him, and he pretends

to like it. It is a red liquid; it is corked up in a bottle with a picture on the outside (it would not do without the picture); it is called *wine*. What would you more? Teuton ingenuity sends him (sham) English and French goods, with (sham) trade-mark, name, bottle, box, wrapper, all complete; and he buys them. Sometimes the homage which vice pays to virtue leaks out in the colourable imitation of a label or the misspelling of a name. Thus gunpowder is sold in well-known flasks marked 'Cubtis & Marvey, Hounslom & London.' In the type used, the substitution of a B for an R in the first name, an M for a H in the second, and an M for a W in Hounslow, does not at once strike the eye accustomed to read 'Curtis & Harvey' in connection with 'villanous saltpetre.' But generally the robbery of good names is wholesale and complete; and if an imitation take, it will itself be imitated at a lower price.

As a set-off against their love of the ugly and their dulness, the people of Colombia must be given credit for honesty. I have already spoken of the honesty of the bogas. I suppose there are on an average 20,000 men and women at the fair, collected together from all parts of the country, and lodged anyhow. It is very seldom indeed that there is a case of pilfering—systematic robbery is unknown. There are no police and no rows, though politics run high; and of the nine United States, no two can be said to be friends. There was a row once, and half the town of Maganguy was burned down; but this was because a late president of the sovereign state of Bolivar went there with some soldiers to keep the peace.

The 'chiel' 'taking notes' found few to 'tak' after the three days during which the fair proper continues. The four following were a little monotonous, although the 'chiel' was well entertained, so far as his physical wants were concerned. How less fortunate wights lived, how they washed and drank (if they drank water) especially, was and remains a mystery to him. The stream of the Cauca is of the colour and consistency of brown pea-soup, and the triple line of canoes, with their inhabitants, that fringe the bank do not add to the purity of the liquid. The 'chiel' has seen water dipped for culinary operations within a few feet of where nameless utensils had been emptied; and filters are unknown. There is no hotel, no restaurant, not even that institution so dear to the American mind—a drinking bar. It struck the 'chiel' that some minor Spiers & Pond might make a good thing of it at Maganguy, but this appears to have struck no one else.

There is no time fixed for the duration of the fair. It ends when a certain Mr. S. pleases. When he packs up, all the rest must do the same. The steamers scream themselves hoarse, the bells ring, the merchants hurry on board in a high state of excitement and perspiration, and the Fair of Maganguy is over.

A. DE FONBLANQUE.

# YOUNG WOMAN AT SIXTEEN AND BOY AT TWENTY-ONE

BY THE REV. FRANCIS JACOX, B.A., AUTHOR OF 'SHAKESPEARE DIVERSIONS'

DUKE OBSINO'S doctrine of wedlock, that the woman should ever take an elder than herself, is enforced by the assurance he gives the seeming Cesario that young men's fancies are 'more giddy and unfirm, more longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn, than women's are.' And it may be taken in effect to chime in with what the sprightly damosel affirms of her sex, and indeed of both sexes, in *Philip van Artevelde:* 

'But we are women when boys are but boys. God gives us grace to ripen and grow wise Some six years earlier.'

Boys will be boys, and young men will be young men. But young men will be boys, it seems, long after young women have given their girlhood the go-by.

To be mocked by one's feminine coevals as over young is, however, nothing like so hard, after all, as to be derided by them as over-old:

'Ah me, how full is youth of mockery!

Because I am some years in advance of you,

Do not you sometimes laugh at my bleach'd hue,

My sunken cheek, and deep-encavern'd eye;

Or, haply, as afar you pass me by,

Compare me with your full-flush'd retinue

Of youthhood?'

But our theme is the advance made by damsels ahead of masculine youngsters, by lassies to the prejudice of lads, in the development of adult conditions and qualities. Richardson rules that from sixteen to twenty-four women are generally several years aforehand with the men in ripeness of understanding, though after that time the men may ripen into a superiority. 'Women, my dear Mrs. Selby, are women sooner than men are men,' Sir Charles Grandison says. Cartwright, in his 'Platonically sentimental' Love's Convert, has these lines to the purpose:

'Love, then, doth work in you what Reason doth In us, here only lies the difference,— Ours wait the lingering steps of Age and Time; But the woman's soul is ripe when it is young.'

In making us first acquainted with Mrs. Woodward's daughters,

Mr. Trollope is careful to premise that, although they had made very positive advances towards the discretion of womanhood, they were of the age when they would have been regarded as mere boys had they belonged to the other sex. The assertion made by Clara van Artevelde that women 'grow on the sunny side of the wall' he accepts as undoubtedly true, and he applies it once and again in another of his books—in the chapter descriptive of Frank Gresham's early loves, for instance, where in one page we read that Mary was very nearly of the same age as Frank, but 'though Frank was only a boy, it behoved Mary to be something more than a girl;' and in another page, concerning Miss Oriel, that 'Frank blushed and Patience There was but a year's difference in their age; Frank, however, was still a boy, though Patience was fully a woman.' That is a significant sentence in Mr. Reade's Christie Johnstone, which tells of his heroine and her patronising regard for Charles Gatty: Besides, as she was twenty-one and he only twenty-two, she felt the difference between herself, a woman, and him, a boy.' So with Nelly and Will, in Mrs. Oliphant's Madonna Mary: 'He was a little older than herself actually; but Nelly was an experienced woman, and could not but look down amiably on such an unexercised inhabitant of the world as "only a boy." Mr. Thackeray tells us that as we see a pauper's child, with an awful premature knowledge of the pawn-shop, able to haggle at market with her wretched halfpence, and battle bargains at hucksters' stalls, so may we find a young beauty, who was a child in the schoolroom a year since, as wise and knowing as the old practitioners on that exchange, as economical of her smiles, as dexterous in keeping back or producing her beautiful wares, as skilful in setting one bidder against another, as keen as the smartest merchant in Vanity Fair. 'I am a woman, and understand things better than a boy like you,' writes the aforesaid Nelly to the aforesaid Will when they are both older grown, and both, if not in the same degree, worldly wiser.

In that chapter of his autobiography, Dichtung und Wahrheit, in which Goethe describes his efforts to make himself agreeable to the sister of his young friend Derones, without succeeding in attracting her notice, he observes, in passing, that 'young girls think themselves far advanced beyond younger boys, and while aspiring to young men they assume the manner of an aunt towards the boy whose first inclination is turned towards them.' In Gretchen's case he owns himself terribly affronted at her setting him down as a child, and believed himself at once cured of all passion for her when she so set him down in the celebrated investigation reports. He felt it intolerable that a girl, at the most a couple of years older than himself, should regard him as a child, while he conceived he had passed with her for a very sensible and clever young man.

Sententiously and sagaciously he remarks in another place that

in girls we love what they are, but in young men what they promise to be.

In telling us that Miss Chaworth looked upon Byron as a mere schoolboy, Moore observes by the way that a seniority of two years gives to the girl, 'on the eve of womanhood,' an advance into life with which the boy keeps no proportionate pace. Leigh Hunt describes his vexation, early in his teens, at being kept a distance by that laughing lass Fanny Dayrell, who would call him petit garçon on the strength of her seniority of two years. According to Mr. Kingsley, 'spiritually and socially the girl develops ten years earlier than the boy.' Frederick Perthes was sorely tried with his 'youthful twenty-year face,' when his former playfellow Frederika came to Leipzig, 'a very handsome girl of sixteen,' and was straightway surrounded by mature admirers and 'highly-educated men' without number, against whom the 'shy and anxious apprentice of nineteen' seemed to have no chance at all. The hero of Great Expectations tells us of his early acquaintance with Estella, that although she called him 'boy' so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about his own age, or very little older; adding, however, that 'she seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty and a queen.' Beatrice, in Miss Baillie's tragedy of Romiero, taking upon her to chide her old playmate Maurice as a 'thoughtless boy,' is answered:

> 'Chide me, indeed, who am two years thy elder, And two good months to boot!—Such high pretension! Have sixteen summers and a woman's robe Made thee so very wise and consequential?'

It was early times, or teens, with David Copperfield when he wrote of Em'ly that, wild and full of childish whims as she was, she was more of a little woman than he had supposed: 'She seemed to have got a great distance away from me, in little more than a year.' 'With what a demure assumption of being immensely older and wiser than I the fairy little woman said I was "a silly boy;" and then laughed so charmingly that I forgot the pain of being called by that disparaging name in the pleasure of looking at her.' rating Coquette soundly for being like her set, in keeping back things, and making mysteries, and not telling all the truth at once, the Whaup, as Tom Cassilis is called in A Daughter of Heth, is fain to excuse her on the ground that she can't help it, she is only a woman. 'And you are only a boy,' she replies, looking up at the tall handsome lad beside her: 'very kind and very generous and very stupid.' 'I am older than you, at least,' says the Whaup, who does not like to be called a boy. Georges Sand remarks that even very young women usually esteem men of their own age as children, apropos of Consuelo's relations with Haydn, who, however, was at the time so small and meagre that he seemed hardly fifteen.

Mr. Disraeli's Lucretia, though really older than Coningsby, felt that a woman of eighteen is, in all worldly considerations, ten years older than a youth of the same age.

Phineas Finn is sententiously instructed by Lady Laura that years have very little to do with the comparative ages of men and women: 'A woman at forty is quite old, whereas a man at forty is young.' Duke Orsino would practically improve the subject by the caution ad hominem, or rather ad virum:

'Then let thy love be younger than thyself, Or thy affection cannot hold the bent; For women are as roses, whose fair flower, Being once display'd, doth fail that very hour.'

Which assertion receives Viola's sighing assent:

'And so they are: alas, that they are so; To die, even when they to perfection grow!'

# CURATES

Although I have not, of course, a very keen sense of the ridiculous, I have a sort of notion that Sydney Smith was poking fun at us when he said there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. In fact, I resemble, in this respect, the inappreciative Scotchman, who sat unmoved at the dinner-table while the witty canon was keeping the rest of it in a roar by a constant succession of his best things, and by and by, when the ladies left, went up to him, and, bursting into a loud laugh, said: 'Mr. Smith, I believe you meant that for a joke'—quoting one of the earlier of the pleasantries. 'Well, sir, I rather fancy I did,' said Sydney. And I fancy, too, that he meant it for a joke when he assigned us—me and my brother-curates, I mean—to a third sex. Grammar tells us the three genders are masculine, feminine, and neuter; why should we go out of our way to alter its nomenclature, and say gentlemen and ladies and—curates?

But if I am deficient in a sense of the ludicrous, I have a much more serious and clerical compensation in the gift of great powers of reflection; and since I took orders (I decline to say how many years ago) I have made the inferior ministry the great subject of my study. I have cultivated, that is, a kind of comprehensive introspection, and devoted much time and thought, when I was not engaged in dancing attendance on the second sex, or writing my sermonswhich take a good deal of time—to marking off my brothers of the inferior clergy into certain broad types or categories, which it may be interesting to both the other sexes to have set down here for their edification; since, though we live so close together in a social sense, the first sex, at all events, is as ignorant of the inner life of the third sex as a native of Boulogne is of the manners and customs of an inhabitant of Folkestone. 'Thou art so near, and yet so far,' is a remark which I fancy might be addressed with considerable appropriateness to the curate of the parish by nine-tenths of his male The rector, and even the bishop-mysteries as they parishioners. are in their degree—are less recondite than the curate. The parsonage and the palace are more open to inspection than the modest second floor where the curate hides his diminished head.

I presume I need scarcely say that it is purely in his social capacity I am here regarding the curate. To touch upon him in his religious character would be singularly out of place. Whatever be his own proclivities, or those of the community amongst which he labours in this respect, he has a very defined social status, and some-

times a certain amount of social influence; and it is of these alone I shall speak. These, it may be, are modified by the school of ecclesiastical thought to which he belongs; but this latter phase I shall leave understood, not expressed. The ingenuity of my readers shall fix this for themselves, just as, I have no doubt, they will find illustrations in the parish where they reside of the classes whereinto I divide my subject. Any average staff of parochial clergy will supply specimens; and as the inferior clergy come to the front a good deal at Christmastide in various ways, such as decorations, social gatherings, &c., it may be interesting, and perhaps useful, to young ladies to classify under their separate heads the working clergy of the district to which they happen to belong. I will say nothing more in the way of individualising than that my illustrations are all taken from living models. I have no more originality in me than I have humour.

I may be accused perhaps of being like those Sybarite little boys and girls who lick all the jam off their bread at the first onset, if I take as my ideal curate number one the full-blooded or Muscular Christian type. This, I am well aware, is a recent development of the species, at least as far as metropolitan and urban society is con-He emanated from the rural districts, and was an offshoot of the fox-hunting parson of past days; but he is a distinct variety in town, and the most marked physiognomical characteristic is the adoption of the moustache and beard. We have in this case an advantage over Mr. Darwin, in the circumstance that we can put our finger down upon the first cleric-in London at all events-who originated this type. Darwin cannot say exactly where, in the lapse of ages, the first tail-less are developed into the genus homo; but the first London clergyman who exercised the soul of his bishop by adorning his face with a beard and moustache is quite historic; and if I were indecorous enough to 'name names,' I should have to pronounce a very celebrated one in this connection. blooded curate has been, as a rule, a boating man at college, and generally addicted to those athletic sports over which the incoming Vice-Chancellor wailed so piteously at Oxford in the most elegant of Latinity a little while since. He is not 'correct' in his clerical attire, being much addicted to morning coats, and not always innocent of 'cutaways.' An advanced specimen of this type has been seen at Lillie-bridge on a bicycle; and as a rule they do not trouble their laundresses much in the way of white ties. Indeed, the philosophic beard of some of them would render the snowy cravat altogether a superfluity.

Decidedly the most marked trait about the full-blooded curate variety is that they are not ladies' men. They prefer bitter beer to tea, and have no heart for muffins; but they can colour a pipe in a way which delights the young hopefuls in every family. If they

sing, their minstrelsy is not ecclesiastical, and the only instrument they condescend to play is the cornet. One very full-blooded example took up the trombone; but the bishop soon withdrew his license, to the great delight of all peaceably-disposed parishioners. One wonders why the muscular Christians ever became curates at all. Their place seems distinctly marked out by nature in the first of the three sexes. It is clearly a case of the round man in the square hole.

The point where this development passes into the well-defined tertiary system or sex is at dancing; and the Terpsichorean or frivolous fellows upon the heels of the full-blooded curate. muscular Christians—like the 10th—'don't dance;' but the frivolous is great at the valse; and here it is that Adonis strikes athwart the orbit of Venus. In the former case he was as far out of range of the Goddess of Love as that handsome but awkward young hunter Here, however, he becomes at once an object of interest to the second sex. If not a marrying man, he is decidedly marriageable, and beyond question 'nice.' He does not, of course, suit the requirements of that exacting class, the ecclesiastical young lady; but then there are in every parish a number of fair creatures who, without being strong-minded, or even so far advanced as to make an officer an ideal of humankind, are still by no means adapted to the dead level of the third sex; and for these the frivolous curate is the 'missing link.' He haunts the Zoo and Botanical, and is great at the Horticultural and the rink. He does not, as a rule, favour the moustache; but his whiskers are long and silky, and his attire unimpeachable. Next to dancing he adores private theatricals, and when stranded in the country, is invaluable during the long winter evenings. But his normal condition is not rustic. He is a city flower. and flourishes principally at the West-end squares and Tyburnian When he dies to curate-nature, and soars above the strata of inferior clerical life, he is generally translated to an episcopal chapel: here he is the receptacle for all the slippers, braces, and smoking-caps worked by the fair hands of the dévouées. He smokes, it is true, but mostly cigarettes, or else Latakia tobacco through a hookah containing rose-water. The frivolous curate occasionally dabbles in literature, and the very ecclesiastical young ladies speak of his sermons as 'moral essays,' pretty but profitless. The old ladies say there is nothing to 'feed upon' in them; but the fathers and brothers and non-ecclesiastical sisters like them, for they are short. As a rule, however, he draws a congregation of men rather than women, though not so much so as the muscular Christians. cod-eved old spinster proposed to constitute a new church party for these frivolous curates, and to christen it 'Fast' Church!

The flute and violin mark off the next class, as far as social qualifications are concerned. The curate now is a curate indeed. We

may call him, perhaps without offence, the pure and simple type. He is the ideal of elderly ladies, and can eat an infinity of crumpets or buttered toast without exhibiting any of the outward visible signs of dyspepsia. His attire is that of a master-undertaker, or a mute who has been an exception to his class in the way of temperance, and so He wears either the frock-coat of an artisan out on a risen in life. holiday, or sometimes arrays himself permanently in a swallow-tail; but his waistcoat is always open, his linen unsullied, and his white tie voluminous. Nearly the only surviving specimens of the ancient build of shirt-collar, called 'gills,' are seen in connection with the curate of the pure and simple type. In summer he delights in alpaca attire, and is never ashamed of the company of his umbrella. the infinite credit of this class be it said that they were the first to initiate the wearing of soft felt hats in the place of the gossamer, still so tenaciously clung to by the frivolous, both in the Church and the The muscular Christian has degenerated into the billycock; but the pure and simple curate is true to his soft felt, and if he only had a confidential adviser at his elbow to guide him to a happier shape of that head-gear, he would be a very good specimen indeed of the honest hard-working English curate.

But take him as he is, irrespective of his hat and umbrella, there is plenty of good stuff in him. You could never mistake him for the undertaker or the waiter, whom he seems to imitate in his attire. because nature has written the word 'gentleman' upon him in good plain round-hand. He is not a bit of a 'swell,' as-softly be it said -the two former types sometimes are; and finical young misses, who are all for bandits and pirates, are apt to instance Simon Pure (as they term him), when biskops in their quadriennial charges complain that the status of the clergy is deteriorating; but Simon Pure means work, and his heart, as well as his head, is in the right He is not a show-flower for the gardens, and would be hopelessly bowled over if he got upon wheels at the rink. He wisely abstains from these resorts, and perhaps is a little inclined to be hard on what he calls 'pomps and vanities' in general. If he concedes at all in this respect, it is limited generally in the direction of the violin or the flute. If more than usually serious, he scratches a quiet violoncello; but his strings are apt to run flat, or his cadenzas on the flute a little gusty. He has sterner work than fiddling or fifing to do, and he does it with his might and main.

Go down East, if you happen to live in London, choosing a Sunday afternoon or a quiet weekday morning for your visit, and you will find Simon Pure, if you choose to call him so, in his element, teaching ragged urchins in Sunday-school or hunting up slums which are not over palatable for your dainty senses. Don't ask the finical young ladies about Simon. Ask the district visitor or the City missionary, or even the poor waifs of Ratcliff and Bethnal Green. They

will tell you something that shall make you inclined to doff your beaver to Simon the next time his artisan's coat and unfashionable

soft felt happen to hove in sight.

Widely different from this, but equally energetic in his way, is the sesthetic curate. A scholar and a gentleman you can see at a glance, but evidently an anachronism in the nineteenth century. We would not miss him, any more than we could spare the storied windows and quaint gurgoyles in some antique cathedral. He is not of our day or generation, but he is a very ornamental restoration, like the bits which modern architects have placed on to the crumbling statues on the richly-sculptured west front of Wells Cathedral. There is no mistaking him for the genuine old article, but he is a capital adaptation. His coat-tails trail the ground, his coat-collar stands erect. and his tie of thinnest lawn turns down over a black stock. culminates, however, in the hat, which is a stiff felt or beaver, like the billycock of the muscular Christian after it has been sat upon. but with beautiful cord and tassels to render it picturesque. is the ideal type of the ecclesiastical young lady. Closely shaven, smooth as that young lady's face, is the æsthetic cheek; white and emaciated as hers the æsthetic hand. But still, apart from all eccentricities, there is a dash of bonhomie, for the most part, about the æsthetic curate which makes him a very important element in our social system, and constitutes the class to which he belongs something more than a 'considerable minority' at the present moment. To see yonder lean but smiling youth, with protracted integuments and beardless visage, you would scarcely suppose that it required special legislation to 'put him down;' but so it is. His normal state is one of inhibition, and bishops dread his little eccentricities more than the bicycle-riding of the muscular or the Terpsichorean performances of the frivolous class. He is the Frankenstein of modern ecclesiasticism; an unquiet spirit which the authorities themselves have raised, and now for the life of them cannot lav.

As a rule the names of our æsthetic curates have figured on the class-lists at their respective universities; but some of them have been men of muscle as well; and these, for the most part, imitate the full-blooded ones in their hirsute adornments. The chin of the æsthetic curate is by no means uniformly shaven, but often wears the philosopher's beard. In fact, there is a curious fusion in process of taking place, giving a blended category which may be termed the æsthetico-muscular school of curate. When the two forces, which we may call the ecclesiastical and mundane, are thus brought to converge on a point, the effect is very disturbing indeed to that vis inertiæ which is often laid down in high latitudes as the essence of the clerical calling.

Very remarkably indeed were these rough categories exemplified at the recent visitation of the Bishop of London.

The muscular Christian drove up in a hansom cab at the very last moment, and having answered to his name, either slunk out by a side-door, or resigned himself to the two hours' charge with the air of a martyr. Released at length, he drove once more in his favourite vehicle to his club, and treated himself to an extra dish or a richer vintage as a reward for having done his duty. Afterwards, over his meditative cigar and cup of coffee, he solaced himself with the thought that visitations do not come, like Christmas or Guy Fawkes day, once a year. Happy in that knowledge, he resigned himself to the columns of his favourite Field or Land and Water.

Adolphus the frivolous was betimes at the cathedral, and a bevy of fair nymphs attended him. They had not much eye or heart for the visitation, but they were all eyes and heart for Adolphus. Neither he nor his muscular brother wore gowns—they had a soul above gowns—and when he too had answered to his name, he quitted the ranks of the clergy and returned to his admirers, who kept a place for him against all intruders.

Simon Pure, regardless of the convenances, carried his gown in a black bag, which looked like that of a lawyer in deep mourning, and even slung it over his shoulder with his faithful gingham as soon as he descended from the knifeboard of the Blackwall 'bus. He arrayed himself in the cathedral yard, and marched to his place in the great church heedless of the supercilious glances of the verger, who would have resigned on the spot if the dean and chapter had requested him to wear so seedy a vestment. Simon Pure is not proud; and he conscientiously listened to the charge, resolved to incorporate not a few of its oracular sentences into his own homespun extempore sermon next Sunday. When it was over he shouldered his Church militant bag again, and, after taking a 'snack' at a luncheonbar, mounted his homeward-bound Blackwall once more, as bold as brass.

The æsthetic curate came in a surplice, so much too short for him that a rude boy suggested he wanted a tuck let down. His attire was very exceptional, and he gave one the idea of an eccentric minor canon who had rushed out of the cathedral vestry with one of the little boys' surplices. But he was correct according to *Hierurgia Anglicana*, and as long as that was the case he could defy public opinion. One cannot help honouring a man who pluckily carries out his principles, whatever one may think of the principles themselves.

A rudis indigestaque moles you say, my masters; but would we have it otherwise? Would we have variety in the world, but none in the Church? I am forgetting myself, however; the Church is not my topic. I only focus these curates at St. Paul's because there I get them in all their infinite variety. As members of our social circle would we have them all reduced to one dead level?

Depend upon it we could not attain that consummation without suffering infinite loss. Nature does not repeat herself; Art does. The beauty of our curate caste is that it has such lots of human nature in it; and, as Mr. Squeers said, it is a blessed thing to be in a state of 'natur'.' The greatest safeguard against England ever being priest-ridden (if any but alarmist old gentlemen cherish such a notion) is the fact that the third sex, among all its little peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, retains so many points of resemblance, and consequent bonds of sympathy, with the other two.

MAURICE DAVIES.

# THE MOON RISING AT SEA

Lo! she rides in her glory, the chaste Queen of Night, And the eastern wave sleeps 'neath her peace-shedding light; And faded to sleep are the bright Isles of Rest, Seen reflected no more on the ocean's calm breast.

Lo! she rides in her glory, our senses entrancing, As we watch her gay beams on each tiny wave dancing, And she smiles as though sorrow ne'er clouded her brow, But that smile—how deceitful!—she's o'erclouded now.

So, so will the heart, whilst in youth it is springing, And joy's brightest fruits all their pleasures are bringing, Rise sweetly and clearly o'er the ocean of care, To be darken'd, alas, by the clouds of despair!

H. D.



M. Fitzgerald, del.

J. R. Battershell, sc.

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# 'TWIXT GREEN AND RED

### III.

Now who is Clementine Maitland? and how is it that she cannot possess that very commonplace thing—a lover—without creating such a disturbance in this world?

First, who is Clementine Maitland?

Nobody very particular, you may be quite sure, or she would not live alone in a shabby little suburban lodging; neither would she tramp about, giving music-lessons to dolts of children and half-grown girls, or hammer out Messrs. Coote's and Godfrey's tuney productions on superannuated pianos, for the benefit of suburban elegancies, every other night or so.

Nevertheless, strange as it may seem when placed in conjunction with these facts, Miss Maitland was a lady—a lady by birth, by education, and, what is more, in feeling. She had neither father nor mother—both died when she was a mere baby; and her remaining relations, being a poor country clergyman, his wife and daughters, and some distant and well-to-do cousins in India, she did not find herself overwhelmed with attentions from her own family.

The clergyman had educated her with his girls until she was fifteen, then he sent her abroad to the Conservatoire at Cologne; whence she returned just a year ago, to attempt that most hopeless of all tasks—namely, the making of a living by teaching music in London.

As to any one of her kith and kin objecting to her living where, how, and with whom she pleased, there was no danger of that, so long as she did not show any inclination to live with them, which, I may add, was a plan about as attractive to this strange young person as a prolonged residence in a dry and commodious charnel-house.

Therefore, O my mythical and intelligent reader, you will doubtless long ere this have discovered that Miss Maitland lived alone because she liked it, and because lodgings and enough to eat were cheaper than a boarding-house and semi-starvation.

And now secondarily.

It does certainly, at first sight, seem odd that a nice girl, and a pretty girl, only eighteen years old, couldn't get married without moving heaven and earth to bring it to pass; that the British aristocracy of birth and the British aristocracy of wickedness must be stirred up and violently agitated, in order that this nice pretty girl may call a very tall, good-looking, well-dressed, and amiable gentleman of the period 'My husband!'

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Such a marvel is worth explanation. Le voilà, in three words. 'A man's folly.'

Mrs. Podmore hit upon the truth when she hinted that Miss Maitland had met Captain Caryswode, alias Algy Scott, at some one of 'er hartist-friends' 'ouses.'

She did so meet him.

There is a social bond between proscribed characters, and Clemmie was sought, and gladly allowed herself to be found, by clever people of all métiers. Could you write, act, dance, sing, paint, or model, you were certain of a very pleasant smile when you came her way.

Captain Caryswode, although he was no better than his neighbours in some respects, had nevertheless escaped the blasé donothingness characterising most army men. He could speak and think of something more improving than the latest edition of La Traviata visible in the Ladies' Mile, the chances of the favourite for the next 'event,' the newest brutality going in the way of torturing dumb brutes, or when 'that confounded bill came due.' He too could enjoy the society of the art-brethren of to-day, and in a lazy amateur fashion gradually incorporated himself in the guild. Indeed, as we have seen, he set up a studio, wherein he spoilt yards of canvas, and painted ideal Clemmies under every conceivable aspect. Among the many painters Captain Caryswode reckoned as his acquaintances, there was one man he called his friend; and it was at his rooms that he first saw the girl who was to play so important a part in his future life.

His assumption of a pseudonym had been occasioned partly by his desire to avoid any further disagreeables with his father, partly to prevent scandal meddling with his love's fair name, and partly to gauge Miss Maitland's actual disposition, which he thought would appear more plainly if she grew to love him in the guise of a poor struggling artist, than if she was aware of his wealth, his position, and the station to which he could ultimately raise her, did she consent to become his wife.

Woman's duplicity is proverbial, so we must not blame Tom's extra caution. Remember, he had acquired his experience of the sex in a manner not calculated to impress him with its virtues. The guerrilla warfare of St. John's Wood and the ambushed tactics of Belgravia teach grim lessons of prudence to the hardy warrior who survives the horrors of the double campaign. As we have seen, the victor of a hundred fights (on Brussels carpet) had prospered in his invasion of the maiden meditations of Clementine Maitland. The girl's heart, after about three weeks' siege, capitulated without terms. She loved him with all the strength of her young fervent nature; and Tom, for the first time in his life, felt that he could clasp a woman to his bosom whose soul was as white as a lily.

Men who have been very rackety are remarkably quick at guessing and knowing the amount of good in a woman. 'My darling's as good as gold core-through,' decided Captain Caryswode, after he had known Clemmie well and intimately for a few days. No other woman should wear wedding-ring of his giving, no other woman should ever call herself Viscountess Mandoville in the years to come. Clemmie had found a steadfast lover. What better fate need a woman desire?

As you are now well en rapport with her past, we will, if you please, return to her present, and inquire the nature of her reflections, when restored privacy permitted her to indulge in the dangerous luxury of a retrospective rêverie.

She could scarcely believe that her 'Algy Scott' was an honourable anybody. What did he call himself? Tom Caryswode; Captain Caryswode. She said the name over to herself time after time, but it would sound strange all the same. The son of a lord, too! Was it possible? Clemmie had very vague notions of lords and ladies. She had never met them in the flesh, and in the spirit they were far too uninteresting for her to trouble herself about them. Now she felt it almost wrong to have allowed one of those select few to fall in love with her, and dimly wondered how the veritable sinner himself had presumed so far on the forbearance of his compeers. Had she never heard,

' Quare non habet ullus amor'?

Presently the question, Wife or no wife? asserted its ugly self in Clemmie's mind. The girl flushed crimson.

What mental pain so keen as that caused by doubt of your best beloved! For a few moments Miss Maitland experienced this; then her reason came to her aid, and she asked herself, 'Why should he not have trespassed farther, knowing my belief in him?' What is there that a loving woman will not forgive her lover? Nay, did she not already forgive him his past sins against her, as demonstrated by Madge Templeton? 'Had I been an earl's daughter,' thought she, 'he could not have treated me with greater chivalry. Before all of them he plainly said I was to be his wife. not called me by that blessed name a hundred times? My love, I won't distrust you!' and she clasped her pretty white hands tightly She was sitting on a low stool by the window, about her knees. and the cool air blowing in through the delicate acacia-boughs, waving outside, fanned her flushed cheeks and throbbing temples most gratefully.

Her poverty! her insignificance! Yes; she could not avoid acknowledging how poor, how insignificant she was. Would Lord Mandoville permit his son to marry an unknown nobody? Had she been a famous artiste—O wasted years!—then there might have been some chance for her. Now there was none. Even if Tom were

willing to ruin himself for her sake, ought she to allow the sacrifice? No. Would she be able in coming years to prevent his feeling that he had thrown himself away? No. You see she had no vanity, no conceit to battle against. What would become of her after they had said a long good-bye, God alone knew; but she would never drag him down from his high estate—that she vowed.

Buried in these mournful cogitations, Clemmie sat on by the window, unconscious how time went. The servant brought in the dinner-tray; she was told to wait,—come again at seven. The shadows lengthened on the turf; the doves coole loudly; still Miss

Maitland communed with self.

Not for long, though. On a sudden the door opened, and Mrs. Podmore looked in, a carefully-prepared sly smile puckering-up her mouth.

Clemmie rose, looking anything but pleased.

'O, I see you're hall alone, my dear! I let myself hin to save trouble,' said Mrs. Podmore suavely, stepping forward on tiptoe, and closing the door behind her with mysterious care.

Miss Maitland gave her no word of welcome,—remained standing. Surely she would state her errand and go. Not quite so fast, Clemmie, my dear; this good lady must not be hurried; she knows

her own importance, and takes her time accordingly.

Arranging her brown-black shawl over her ample shoulders by means of three severely energetic tugs, Mrs. Podmore seated herself firmly on the sofa, and disposing her parasol and black bag on two chairs near her, complacently regarded 'my dear' with a keen satisfaction in her cunning little eyes, sufficiently irritating to that young person.

'Well, miss,' said she, 'you looks tired. I s'pose you've been

faggin' about, givin' lessons; just now's your busy time.'

'I am neither tired, nor have I been giving lessons, to-day.

What do you want with me?' somewhat haughtily.

Her lack of pupils cost Miss Maitland many an anxious hour, but she was not going to hang her heart on her sleeve for such a

disreputable old daw as this wardrobe purchaser to peck at.

'We'll come to that by'm-bye,' enunciated Mrs. Podmore, not one whit abashed by the curt reply her query had elicited. 'I see,' she continued, cocking her head on one side in a sham sympathetic fashion, 'you're a little hupset; that's what makes you look so flushed and 'eavy about the heyes. A little bird 'as told me 'ow matters is goin' with a certing young lady and a certing young gen'elman. Lor now, don't be shy with your poor Poddy'—this coaxingly—'the men will 'ave their way, my dear. I've buried two 'usbands, and may a third; so I'm sure I ought to know 'em by this time. The secret is, love 'em or leave 'em. Love 'em or leave 'em is the cure for their complaint, take my word for it.'

'I don't understand you!'

'Pooh!' ejaculated Mrs. Podmore, waxing scornful, with a vigour which denoted a recent sojourn in the vicinity of 'white satin.' 'Don't you try to gammon me! Which is it—'is birth hor 'is fortune? If you'll let me give a guess, I should say it was 'is fortune. P'r'aps you don't know that Captin Caryswode will 'ave fourteen thousand a year when 'e's Lord Mandoville, if 'e 'as a penny. 'E's very well horf now too; 'is father allows 'im three thousand, I've 'eard, besides what 'e gets from 'is mother, 'oo was a hairess; she's dead now.'

How she watched her, the cunning old reptile!

But no shameful blushes or confusion marred the young beauty of Miss Maitland's face. Indeed she was far too angry at the woman's familiarity to pay much heed to what she said. Forced to make some answer, she observed carelessly:

'Suppose I don't know Captain Caryswode.'

'S'pose you don't know your hown name,' tartly responded Mrs. Podmore, giving her shawl another and a fiercer tug; 'don't you go for to throw dust in my heyes, my dear. You were fond enough of Mr. Scott without a brass farden; why be ashamed of 'im when 'e turns hout a swell with lots of money?'

'Money makes little difference in certain cases,' vaguely turning to the window.

The woman's audacity was astounding. But how was it she knew so much? Again that odious voice:

'You didn't hought to be hoffended with a 'umble friend as takes a hinterest in you, my dear. I've your welfare at 'eart, helse I shouldn't 'ave bothered you to-night. I've got a hoffer for you;' and Mrs. Podmore blinked solemnly with both eyes, and settled her misshapen bonnet.

Miss Maitland woke.

'An offer; a real offer!' exclaimed she. 'Not another concert?'

'Better than that,' chuckled Mrs. Podmore, her eyes all atwinkle with secret satisfaction. 'You won't care about concert playin' and such slavish work soon, I'll warrant. Ah, the world grows wickeder hevery day! Just to think of them gay young men findin' hout that nothink throws a gal horf 'er guard so completely as consideration and respeck and hall that. Eh, dear me!'

The iniquity of mankind appeared to afflict Mrs. Podmore profoundly, insomuch that she felt compelled to breathe a gusty sigh, which spread abroad a slight soupçon of—well, it might have been tea—and it might have been essence of juniper.

Clemmie regarded her interrogatively; the gist of her remarks was not so clear as was desirable.

'Yes, my dear,' Mrs. Podmore continued, 'you may laugh at me as much as you please. Young people will 'ave their joke, but

I tell you to make 'ay while the sun shines. Strike while the hiron's 'ot. Man vanisheth away like the flower of the field'-with a pathetic shake of the head—'and 'coman too. Beauty's fleetin', very fleetin'.'

'But whatever has all this got to do with me?' asked Miss Maitland; while Mrs. Podmore dried her eyes, her graceful imagery having 'brought 'er tears,' according to her favourite expression.

'Sit down by me, my child, and I'll soon hexplain. What a sweet little hear you 'ave, to be sure! No wonder as the gen'elmen runs hafter you so. Why, you're puffection in your way. the prettiest gal of your hacquaintance?" says a young friend of mine to me on Sunday night a-comin' hout of church. Says I, "If you goes past No. 17 Murray-crescent at the right time, you'll see 'er." It's as true as hi'm a livin' 'ooman.'

Clemmie showed some impatience.

'And why should your beauty fade away in this dark corner of the hearth? Don't you like hamusement? Don't you like dress? Don't you like hadmiration? Well, then, why shouldn't you 'ave 'em? Money's the root of hall 'appiness. If you've got a full purse, you've got a good 'eart; if you've got good credit, you've got a good c'racter. Don't tell me it hain't so; I knows it his. But if you think seriously that Captin Caryswode means to marry you, that 'e can marry you, you're a born fool!'

'How dare you! how dare you!' cried Clemmie, stamping her foot, so wroth was she that the old wretch who sat grinning there should presume to proffer her such vile counsels. 'Captain Caryswode never authorised you to insult me in this dreadful way.

out of my sight, you horrible woman!'

Her impetuosity was too great to be withstood. The flame of righteous rage burnt and blazed in her gray eyes.

Up rose Mrs. Podmore.

'All very well, my girl,' smiled she. 'The day may come when you'll think otherwise-when you'll be glad of 'elp; and you'll get it, I fancy. He, he, he!'

Scarcely were the words out of her mouth when - tap-tap. Mrs. Podmore found herself face-to-face with a pale dark-whiskered

man of middle height and staid appearance.

'Is Miss Maitland in?' inquired he.

'You can see for yourself,' was the somewhat impolite rejoinder. 'I wonder what 'e wants now? She's a sly one, for all 'er hairs and graces, I'll bet! It's your knowin' ones as is the 'ardest to get hover,' reflected this good soul subsequently as she let herself out.

Meanwhile Mr. Miller-for that was the name of the newcomer—had shaken hands with and said 'Good-evening' to Clemmie, who met him with a pleasant smile notwithstanding, as though he were a welcome sight.

'I met a man-servant at the gate, and he had this note for you,'

said he, smiling back at her—a strangely happy smile.

Ah, John Miller, you are throwing away heart-gold at the feet of a girl who has her hands full of priceless gems. She scarcely gives your folly a thought, far less a regret. Be wise in time: you are the joy of your mother, and she is a widow. Get Miss Maitland's fair face out of your head, and return to your innocent Sunday flirtations with your brother-clerks' sisters. Will you too swell that saddest chorns:

# 'Vitam perdidi operose nihil agendo'?

'O, thank you,' said Clemmie absently, glancing at the address—'so, from him'—and then added, 'Won't you have some supper with me?' still looking down. She could no more help being kind and friendly than the sun could help shining. Anger was with her but a passing cloud.

There are some women whom to look at is to regret that they must ever grow old, must ever become soured by trouble and disappointment. They are so dear as they are! Miss Maitland was

one of these bright beings.

Was it reasonable to expect Mr. Miller to reject the offer of an evening in paradise? I say, No; and so said he. Replying that he should be only too glad to eat cold lamb and salad with Miss Maitland, instead of equivocal potted lobster and tasteless bread-and-butter without her, he ran up-stairs, to effect those severe ablutions and other decorative details necessary to a hard-working London man before he ventures into the society of his lady friends.

By the time that John had gained the privacy of his own sanctum, which was situated au troisième, the brief words in which Tom, dating from Long's, assured his darling that all was as jolly as possible, and that he should do his best to see her that evening, after he had dined with his father, who had proved himself the kindest of the kind, had already undergone one reading, and seemed likely to enjoy a second. But lovers ought to be permitted to keep their folly to themselves, out of consideration for the feelings of their sane fellow-creatures; wherefore we will let Clemmie enjoy her sugar-plums, like a baby, in peace: de gustibus, &c.

# IV.

PERHAPS Miss Maitland never looked more lovely than when she reëntered her sitting-room that evening about seven o'clock, apparelled in a pale mauve muslin, all wavy little frills and soft clear folds, with a splendid scarlet and gold Indian shawl over her arm, which she had just brought down from her room, to pack up and send off to the friend who had lent it to her as an additional wrap on leaving a hot theatre the night before.

'I shall be quite thankful when that magnificent affair is safe at home again,' she thought, throwing it on the sofa. 'Whatever should I do if any harm came to it? How lovely it is, to be sure!' And with the pleasure of her sex in pretty things, more especially when ordained for the adornment of their own sweet selves, she drew it to her, and examined the marvellous embroidery with wondering admiration.

Whilst thus engaged, Mr. Miller made his reappearance, sleek, clean, radiant of countenance. He knew, as well as everybody else in the house, that Miss Maitland was engaged to Mr. Scott, an artist whose renown was still en herbe. He even knew Mr. Scott to speak to; for Clemmie, quite innocent of any manœuvring, had introduced her friend and her lover to each other, had even ventured to hope that pleasant unaffected John Miller, bank clerk though he was, might be numbered among the intimates of her married home, and become as prized by her husband as he was by herself.

I have not yet made the acquaintance of the exalted individual who can accept this sort of pseudo-friendship with hearty good will. What man bestows on his chum's wife the same honest liking he has through long years bestowed on the chum himself? What woman welcomes with sincere pleasure the forced civilities of her husband's 'old friends'?

John Miller had no artistic sympathies. He considered a barrel organ-grinder and Mr. Hallé pretty equally gifted; Mr. Millais and the mutilated beggar drawing mackerel on the pavement in coloured chalk interested him precisely in the same degree; Canova and the Italian image-man were bracketed in his opinion.

You will perceive, then, that Algy Scott as artist did not draw largely on Mr. Miller's respect; as man still less. There was something radically antagonistic in their two natures, at least so John assured himself. Mr. Scott was an idle fashionably-dressed dangler on the skirts of society; he might mean well by Miss Maitland, and he might mean ill. Mr. Miller inclined to the latter view.

Don't laugh at him, poor old fellow! he has an honest heart, if a limited understanding, and is worthier your patient consideration than many un sot frotté d'esprit. After all, I for one don't wish to say three words, either on paper or off it, to any man who tries to make you believe he's a devoted admirer of the favoured mortal who is loved by the woman he himself would go through fire and water to possess.

Clemmie (women are so sharp!) knew quite well that her efforts to amalgamate these two were destined to be unsuccessful; wherefore she made up her mind to hold her peace concerning the revelation of her lover's real name and belongings, and let John enjoy his supper quietly after his own prosaic fashion.

'What a very handsome shawl!' observed he, after a somewhat lengthy pause, happening to catch sight of the glittering fabric aforesaid.

Clemmie was tired, and slightly preoccupied; also the last new play at the Royalty, Miss Somebody's dancing in the burlesque at the Strand, Edith Wynne's delightful ballad singing, the Grecian bend, gipsy bonnets, and the war, were not particularly enlivening topics, it must be allowed.

'Yes,' she answered, 'it is a beautiful thing, but not mine. I wish it was, for then I should not be so dreadfully fidgety about it. It belongs to my friend Mrs. Vining, and I ought to have returned

it to-day.'

And therewith she rose. They had finished.

'Shall I bring down my violin?' suggested Miller; he had of late done violence to his natural instincts by taking a series of lessons on that long-suffering instrument. 'Would it bore you very much to try through that duet I left with you yesterday?'

'I haven't seen a bar of it.' John's violin was rather a trial at all times; to-night it would be torture. 'Don't think me rude, but if you wouldn't mind I would rather we played some other evening. The truth is I'm yawny and headachy. It was so hot in the middle of the day.'

John eyed her, as though he doubted the power of the sun to produce such extraordinary fatigue, unaided by collateral circumstances.

'Wouldn't you like a turn in the garden? it seems so charming among the trees.' This with animation, noticing his dubious expression.

'I should like to do whatever you like.'

Murray-crescent possessed, as I have said, a common garden, extending along the backs of the houses, and prettily arranged for croquet and tête-à-tête rambles. In it Miss Maitland and her guest were presently strolling.

Neither was very talkative. They knew each other well enough to be silent when they had nothing particular to say—a luxury not lightly to be esteemed, let me add. Clemmie's heart swelled every

now and then with silent joy, but she was

'too near love's secret to be glad; As whose deems the core will surely melt From the warm fruit his lips' caress hath felt Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut hard.'

Following a shady path, they presently reached a small iron gate, locked to the general public, each inhabitant of the crescent possessing a key of his own. Standing on the opposite side of the street was a man of shabby appearance—a man neither young nor old, of middle height, but seeming taller, owing to his extreme thinness,—

a man with ragged reddish hair and a ragged reddish beard, and reddish eyebrows, from beneath which peer stealthily light cunning eyes—cruel wicked eyes—eyes that might well make you quail, you being helpless,—not at all a pleasant-looking man, neither calculated to arrest attention.

Alas, blackguardism lurketh at the thievish corners of almost

every street in the great Babylon.

Nevertheless, there Clemmie stood as if rooted to the ground, staring at this miserable creature with a fascinated earnestness which struck Mr. Miller as little short of miraculous; and the man plainly was in some way known to her, for he nodded, straightened himself

up, as though—as though—

'O, horror!' cried Clemmie, shrinking up to John; when—the garden-wall was nowhere higher than a tall man's shoulder, and the trees planted along it grew so thinly that you could well make out the figure and features of any comer—who should turn the corner, a cigar between his lips, an incipient smile subtly irradiating his benign countenance, evidently in the best of humours with his world and himself, but Captain Caryswode. 'Tom, Tom,' reflected Clemmie, 'come to see me, as he said he would. O, goodness, goodness!'

Dare I announce the appalling fact?

She did not seem glad to see him. So indeed it was, though, and John observed it.

'After all, no game could be lost until it was played out. Who knew how all this would end?' thought he. Vraiment!

Meanwhile Captain Caryswode passed on.

Then, retiring into the shade of a large chestnut-tree, which effectually screened her from all passers-by, the girl gripped hold of John by the sleeve.

'You saw that man?' whispered she.

'Yes;' and he felt her hand shake. 'He is always hanging

about—skulking vagabond!'

'Don't, don't!' strickenly, the sweet voice full of tears. 'If you have the friendship for me I have for you, you will get him out of the way—out of my way. O, dear Mr. Miller, do help me—help a miserable girl who is driven nearly distracted!' She did indeed seem strangely affected.

John could scarcely reply, so bewildered was he—first, by her delightful proximity—she was almost in his arms; secondly, by the oddness of her manner. At length he answered—seconds to him were centuries to her—'I will of course do what you ask—do my best, at least; but—'

'O, how can I thank you?'

How dared Mr. Miller be prudent and cold-blooded, in despite of such sweet blandishment? He did dare, however, and observed, looking away through the trees,

'I'm delighted to be of service to you, that you know; but don't you think it is foolish to temporise with this sort of fellow? If you've got anything against him, let me take up the case for you. Don't let fright prevent your punishing an offender.'

'You don't know what you're talking about,' exclaimed Clemmie

almost angrily; 'how should you?'

'I have no wish to trespass on your confidence'—not without sadness. 'You know that you can do no wrong in my opinion, unluckily for me.' This last sotto voce. Yes, John, very unluckily for you.

'I know that you are very good!'

'Very! There, say no more about it!' And pulling a soft gray cap out of his pocket (the bye-laws of London society forbid mankind to perambulate the streets bare-headed), he walked away towards the gate,

'Weary with the march of life.' A pitiful smile wreathed Clemmie's lips.

There is a certain mournfulness to a susceptible person in the thought that happiness is but another name for pain.

# V.

'You got my note all right, then?' The first quick delight born of reunion had died away; reality reigned paramount again.

'Yes;' and a sigh, her hands clasped in his, her eyes on the top button of his waistcoat.

'Why do you sigh?'

'I don't think I ought to let you marry me.'

'Not let me marry you!' echoed Captain Caryswode in a tone of the profoundest amazement. 'What's put that into your head?'

'I'm not grand enough to be Lady Mandoville.'

Tom shook his head. He didn't know what to make of it.

'But you'll have plenty of time to starch yourself before you're that,' observed he deprecatorily after a while; 'at least we'll hope so.'

It was Clemmie's turn to shake her head now.

'Besides, you're very nice as you are,' with an approving smile.
'My father admires you immensely. Yes, he does, really.' Miss Maitland seemed to doubt the validity of that statement. 'And between ourselves, you know, I think he's rather glad to hear that I'm going to settle down,' somewhat shamefacedly.

Clemmie eyed him curiously, and then looked away out of the window. Madge Templeton's hard reckless face rose up before her

with unpleasant distinctness.

'I'm afraid you've been very wicked indeed,' said she grimly.

'I've not been a saint,' coolly. 'But since I've known you, darling'—this with a subtle tenderness hard to be withstood—'I seem to have become a different man. Don't fling me back into all

the old sins and follies, Clemmie. If you'll only trust me, my life shall show you how deeply I love you—indeed it shall.' He was

truly very much in earnest.

Was it possible, then, that she could satisfy the taste, the requisitions, of one whose lightest wish had been the law of far more beautiful, more intellectual, more fascinating women than herself? Should she believe in and forgive him? or should she, with unyielding morality, bid him leave her to the calm enjoyment of—an applauding conscience?

Silence, oppressive portentous silence.

'Well?' giving her hand a little squeeze to wake her up.

She said nothing, but she looked at him.

Captain Caryswode desired no other answer.

A suspicious pause.

'Give me your hand,' said he presently, when they were seated on the sofa talking of the merry days to come; 'the left one.'

Clemmie obeyed.

'There!' exclaimed he, slipping a splendid diamond gipsy ring on the third finger. 'Slave of the ring you are, Miss Maitland, for once and for ever!' And he sealed the contract with a kiss.

'How magnificent!'

- 'It belonged to my mother,' explanatorily; 'I always meant it for my wife, and now she's got it.' And another kiss.
- 'The wonderful thing to me is that your father has consented to our marriage,' observed Clemmie after a while, turning the ring round and round.
- 'Well, you see, certain events in his own life have made him shy of believing too much in the good of marrying a woman for her money or her rank,' a trifle bitterly. 'He was awfully fond of some girl whom my grandparents refused to receive as their daughter-in-law, although she was quite respectable—a clergyman's daughter, I fancy; and the loss of her—she died abroad—was the great grief of his life. I've heard all this from an old cousin of ours, who knows everything about everybody. Then, you see, my mother and he couldn't hit it off exactly. So, altogether, he's had enough of Mrs. Grundy—'

'But how did he first find out that you were silly enough to like me?' interrupted Clemmie, arranging the bit of heliotrope to her greater satisfaction.

'O, never mind about that,' airily; 'that doesn't matter. Let bygones be bygones.'

A shadow fell on the girl's bright face.

'By all means,' said she, smiling sadly; 'still I doubt whether I am not acting wrongly in encouraging you to think any more about me. It isn't fair.'

There was not a shade of coquetry in her manner. It was plain that she spoke in sober earnest, be her reason what it might. 'Why isn't it fair?' asked Tom abruptly.

She vouchsafed no answer.

'Come,' exclaimed he, 'this won't do at all. If there's one thing in the world I cordially detest, it is mystery; and a woman never hides anything unless she's ashamed of it. So out with it, Clemmie,—at once.'

But she only shook her head.

'You'd never look at me again,' said she dully. How could

she yield up her life-flower to 'violent Fate'?

Captain Caryswode seemed struck. He believed in her as he believed in his own honour. To suspect her of impurity—perish the thought!—it was sacrilege.

'How do you know that? How do you know that I should

never look at you again?' questioned he severely.

'I know it.'

'That is absurd. You have no right to assume anything of the sort. Tell me,—is this secret of yours connected with—with some man who has made love to you?' with difficulty. It was not agreeable to suggest the existence of such a person.

'No.'

'No; on your word, no?'

'On my word, no,' her eyes full on his, her face grave to solemnity.

'Then'—and Tom drew her gently to him—'I am content. You can tell me or not tell me, as you like; but—'

'But if I don't, you won't distrust me or be angry with me?' eagerly.

'I won't distrust you or be angry with you!' And peace was duly ratified.

Time waits for no man, however, not even a bridegroom-elect, and the deepening twilight soon proclaimed that it was getting late.

'I don't like leaving you,' said Tom, slowly rising; 'but I'm afraid I must. It would be hardly kind to condemn the old gentleman to his own society all the evening; and I want to run into Browne's on my way.'

It was at Mr. Browne's studio that a certain rencontre took place.

'Ah!' smiled Clemmie. 'What a shame of you two cunning creatures. Of course he knew!'

Captain Caryswode smiled. One clinging farewell kiss, and he was gone.

# VI.

CLEMMIE stood wrapped in reflection. Despite the possible grief looming athwart her future, she was very happy. At eighteen one does not trouble oneself much with vague imaginings. That she

was the chosen wife of the Honourable Captain Caryswode did indeed seem amazing, when viewed separately from the events of the last six weeks; but after all, what woman living could, would, or did love that same Honourable Captain Caryswode as did she, Clementine Maitland? She felt his first kiss on her lips. Ah, how sweet that pale spring night—so long ago it seemed—when, midst burgeoning trees and blossoms glad with dew, she knew herself for his beloved!

Hark, though—footsteps! Who can it be?

Bang—tramp—tramp! and in lurched the very man who had frightened her so but an hour before.

Clemmie rushed to the other side of the room, her face deadly pale, and her hands spread out as though to keep him off. He was not alone, however: John Miller followed close.

- 'Don't be frightened, Miss Maitland,' exclaimed he; 'and pray don't give him a farthing. I did as you wished, and I thought he was safe; but just as I came in now, I found him on the doorstep, trying to enter the house, like the burglarious thief he is,' making at the fellow.
- 'Paws off, Pompey!' remarked that individual, who had already accommodated himself with a seat. 'You don't know manners, sir; 'pon honour you don't.'

John glowed.

- 'What shall I do?' said he; 'send for a policeman?' The man laughed.
- 'Leave me,' said Clemmie; and she turned on and lit the gas.

'Leave you?'

'Yes!' in the tone of one about to suffer martyrdom.

Looking from one to the other, John went, but reluctantly.

'I don't like the look of it,' said he to himself, 'and I don't think it would be at all right to leave her entirely at that fellow's mercy.' So he betook himself to the front parlour—it being unoccupied—and sat down to read a stray volume of Sharpe's London Magazine, which he found on the table—somewhat fruitlessly, I may add.

Relieved from the restraint imposed on her by the presence of a third person, Miss Maitland appeared at no loss for words.

'When shall I be able to trust your promise, Hugh?' she exclaimed bitterly, still keeping as far off as was possible.

Hugh passed the back of his hand across his eyes, with the apparent intention of removing a tear, which, it is scarcely necessary to add, was not forthcoming.

'Didn't you get my letter?'

'Your letter? Pooh!' contemptuously. 'I'll have no more of your letters; I'll come and see you, my dear, instead. Your landlady must think you very much neglected by your own family.

She shall see you've got one decent relation in the world to boast of, at all events.'

What a laugh !--enough to chill the marrow in one's bones.

'You'll kill me.'

'Kill you!—not I. I've got your character to think of, my Clementina. The charge of your morals devolves on me. I shall do my best to fulfil the responsibility.'

A slight thickness of utterance was here perceptible. Mr. Miller's shilling had accomplished its destiny. Again Clemmie

shuddered.

'How dare you talk to me in this way!' she exclaimed, incensed at the man's cool insolence. 'You know uncle Henry bade me never see you or hear from you as long as I lived. Our mother's last hours were embittered by your villany. If I had not been such a fool as to listen to your whining story of having nothing to eat, you would not be here to-night. I am well punished.'

What would become of her? what would become of her?

The man tilted his chair.

'This sort of talk don't become you at all,' yawned he, rocking himself gently to and fro. 'Is there another brother in the world who would respect his sister's idle prejudices as I do yours? You say, "I'm ashamed of you. Here am I, a regular swell; there are you, out at elbows. Keep out of my way." I keep out of your way. You say, "I must play my own cards after my own fashion; don't you interfere." Do I interfere? Could any man shut his eyes to your goings on with greater complacency? Pshaw! I won't condescend to argue.'

Her brother! Yes, her brother. That miserable sot the brother of Captain Caryswode's fiancée—was it possible? She refined, pure, elegant; he coarse, vile, and low. Sorrow enough in store for you, Miss Maitland, an I mistake not.

'My goings on? your complacency?' repeated she wonderingly.

'Are you mad?'

'Neither mad nor drunk, though I owe you no thanks for my sanity or my sobriety! Fancy a virtuous young woman giving a feller a bob to tempt her brother to make a beast of himself, so that he mightn't come between her and her d—d aristocrat of a lover. Do you suppose I'm always seen when I'm seeing, my dear? I like your taste, though; you keep up the honour of the family!' grinning tipsily.

Clemmie shut her hot eyes, as if she had reached the extremest limits of endurance. Luckily for her reputation there was no one in the basement-floor except the servant, who was far too tired with her diurnal labours to trouble herself gratuitously about the lodgers. Mrs. Boodles had gone out to supper with a friend.

'Will you listen?' said she, clasping her hands, and trying hard

to be calm and coherent. 'If you come here any more you will ruin me,—ruin me entirely; but I will do all I can for you on one condition, namely, that you return to Manchester.'

'O, yes; I daresay. Go back to Manchester, and live a dog's

life and die a dog's death. No, thank you!'

'Then what do you mean to do?'

- 'Well, look here,' forbearingly. 'If you'll give me a couple of sovs I'll go home and think. That's fair, isn't it? Give me a couple of sovs, and I'll go home and think.'
  - 'I haven't got it.'

'Rot!'

- 'But indeed I haven't.'
- 'Well, then, I sha'n't go.'

Just then he spied Sir Henry's castaway cigar-end in the grate, and by dint of holding tight on with one hand to the mantelpiece, contrived to pick it up.

'There, take all I have!' cried Clemmie, flinging her open purse on the table. 'I sha'n't have a farthing to pay my rent with to-

morrow; but what does that matter to you?'

'Quite so,' laconically rejoined Mr. Maitland, getting up and emptying the contents of the poor little purse into the palm of his hand, whence they were speedily transferred to his trouser-pocket.

This satisfactory performance concluded, he glanced furtively round the room. For a second his mean eyes rested on Mrs. Vining's shawl. Clemmie had turned her back on him after flinging him her purse. She was too outraged to care to see more of him than she need, and she felt sure that, having robbed her of all the money she had, he would speedily take his departure. Her anticipations proved correct.

A brief space, and—hush!

- 'I beg your pardon,' flurriedly—the girl's head rested on her arms—arms flung out despairingly, in a very agony of self-abandonment, on the little round table—'but did you send anything away by that man?'
  - 'Why? What do you mean?' starting up, red with fright.
- 'Well, I was sitting in the other room—I was afraid you might want me—and as he went out I saw him (the door was ajar) cover something up with his coat. I think it was that shawl. The gold sparkled under the gaslight, but he slipped out too quickly for me to catch him.'
- 'O, whatever shall I do!' exclaimed the poor soul, hurrying to the sofa and tumbling all the cushions and antimacassars into a confused heap.

How that ring flashed! John's eyes followed it, and 'where day was' he saw 'the likeness of the night.' But no shawl was there.

'He has taken it,' said Clemmie, her voice muffled by despair.

'Was there ever any one so wretched as I am?' pressing her fingers hard upon her throbbing temples.

John would have given all he had in the world to help her, and

he could do nothing.

'Can't I go to the police-station, and give a description of it and the man?' asked he. 'Perhaps it may be heard of at the pawnshops.'

'No, no, no!' she cried. 'I know where he lives; I must go and get it from him at once.'

And she moved towards the door.

'Not alone; surely not alone!' his hand upon her arm—so soft and warm it felt through the sleeve of her muslin dress. 'You will be insulted, perhaps assaulted. I cannot hear of such a thing.'

Did she long to accept the guardianship of this manly goodhearted creature, whose affectionate brown eyes looked at her with such anxious tenderness? I think she did, just a little. But there was no help for it.

'It doesn't matter,' answered she, trying to smile at him. 'I must recover that shawl; it's worth a hundred pounds. I could never make up to Mrs. Vining for its loss; it was given her by her brother, who is now dead. Don't keep me, dear Mr. Miller, but tell me the time. I must be off at once;' this hastily cloaking herself in a waterproof, which always hung on the stand in the hall.

'It's just ten,' replied John. 'But surely I may come a little of

the way with you?'

O, that it were his happy right to protect her now and always!

'I must get an omnibus to the Edgware-road,' putting on her gurden-hat. 'Wait one moment.'

She recollected that she had no money. Hurrying back into her room, she flew to her work-basket. There, under a pile of bright-coloured wools, gleamed her last shilling, saved for next Sunday's offertory. Her purse closed on it with a hungry snap; then she rejoined John.

'How kind it is of you to take all this trouble about me!' she

said gratefully, as they walked up the crescent side by side.

'I wish you'd trust me to deal with this man for you,' he answered, after a few moments' silence. 'I don't want to seem a bore, but I really believe I could free you from his persecution. By the way, I saw him talking to that woman whom I met at your door this afternoon. They were gossiping at the corner.'

'Indeed!'-a very meaning 'indeed.'

Before long a 'John Bull' omnibus overtook them.

'Are you sure I mayn't come?' inquired John, as Clemmie seated herself in that roomy and cumbrous vehicle.

'Quite sure,' replied she, smiling at his pertinacity. 'Goodnight.'

He waited by the lamp-post from which the 'bus had started until it was out of sight; and then, remarkable to relate, instead of retracing his steps homeward and retiring to his chamber, with the docility of a well-conditioned young man who entertained a proper respect for his constitution, he slowly strolled along through the Grove, in the direction of the Edgware-road. Poor John!

# VII.

And what of Hugh Maitland?

My sense of justice does not permit me to insult a possible reader's intelligence, by enforcing on his or her perceptive faculties the already patent fact that this said Hugh was a paltry scoundrel core-through.

He was not a villain on a large scale. His petits lachetés scarcely reached the grander dimensions of actual crime. Some one has described Richelieu's character as composed of the peelings of great vices. In those words behold Hugh Maitland. He would pilfer when he had the chance, he would bully a woman—he might even strike her when he was in one of his drunken furies—he would kick a small dog when no one was looking, he would lie lavishly; but he had a wholesome dread of the rigours of justice, implanted in his breast at an early age by circumstance. Clemmie alluded to a brokenhearted mother and an ungrateful son. Fact supported her allegations.

Hugh Maitland started fairly in life. He was many years older than his sister, being the eldest of a large family, now sleep-

ing quietly in their graves, whilst she was the last born.

Interest procured him a clerkship in a large mercantile house in Manchester, and until his father's death he behaved himself tolerably well; but, unluckily, before he had been in his situation quite six months, that poor gentleman succumbed to the united pressure of disappointment, ruined health, blighted prospects, and despair of ever bringing things round.

Mrs. Maitland grieved sorely for her loss; and her grief, combined with a naturally yielding disposition, totally incapacitated her

for quelling the dangerous proclivities of her darling son.

His very vices were virtues in this fond silly woman's eyes. He liked good company; it was but reasonable that he should, considering his beauty, his engaging manners, and aptitude for society. He liked expensive dress and fast amusements; again did the mother's heart invent excuses for his levity. Alas! the 'firm' failed to view Mr. Hugh's follies and faults with the like indulgence.

They plainly told him he must alter his ways, or go.

He elected to retain his idiosyncrasies.

When he did take his departure, however, he had made a sufficiently good use of his time to have acquired an intimate knowledge

of the peculiarities of his employers' caligraphy, and soon appeared

anxious to turn his proficiency to account.

With the usual alacrity of gentlemen in their onerous position, they endeavoured to draw public attention to the laudable zeal of their ex-clerk, in disseminating such admirable facsimiles of their signatures as the two specimens already in their possession within three months of his dismissal.

The shock of discovering her beloved child to be a forger and a reprobate proved too much for Mrs. Maitland's strength. Before long she lay by the side of her dead husband, and Clemmie enjoyed the somewhat grim protection of her clerical uncle.

Owing to the strenuous exertions of this worthy person, Hugh Maitland was spared the disgrace of public exposure; but the task

lacked sweetness.

Nothing makes genteel paupers more irate than being forced to spend any portion of their meagre pittances in acts of unlucrative and unknown charity.

Hugh's uncle felt irate.

To inform the world that he had saved his nephew from penal servitude, by generously cashing the forged cheques he had circulated, would scarcely tend to the glorification of himself and his family.

The world is not prone to clasp criminals or their connections to its bosom. Society may weep a few crocodile tears before the face of the black sheep's nearest and dearest; but behind that afflicted individual's back it too often whispers that 'there was always something queer about those people; we never quite liked them.' Poor dear world!

Clemmie, as you are aware, was forbidden to hold any communication with her graceless brother; and the Christian man folded his clean hands meekly, believing he had done his duty like a hero; whilst Hugh, hating labour, dropped from bad to worse—from tavern oratory to pothouse ribaldry, from slangy blackguardism to starving vagrancy.

This, then, is the story of the squalid wretch who so lately aired his tipsy insolence in Miss Maitland's little sitting-room. But

enough of the past. Let us return to the present.

Directly Mr. Maitland found himself safe in the street, with the shawl under his arm, he set himself to discover how it might become most profitable. What he meant to do with it was not quite clear. That it was worth money was certain; but as he had plenty in his pocket for present emergencies, he decided that it would be foolish to 'put it away' in a hurry; also, he could not quite make up his mind as to the legal aspect of the matter. Clemmie would doubtless, on missing it, suspect him; no false pride could blind Hugh to that probability. Quite as certainly would she demand its immediate return, or proof positive of his innocence.

That the girl lied, when she said he had taken all the money she possessed in the world, he did not doubt for a second. It was not likely that one pound and a little loose silver should be the entire amount of coin at the command of a girl living in decent lodgings, eating regular meals, and last, but not least, openly receiving the attentions of a well-dressed gentleman of undeniable style and good breeding. Pshaw! How could she be such an idiot as to suppose that he was going to swallow such a cock-and-bull story as that? No, no.

After all, the shawl might turn out more lucrative if kept in his own possession than if delivered over, for a miserable 'ten bob' or so, to the tender mercies of the avuncular.

When people want things, they must pay for them. If Miss Maitland wanted her gorgeous property, she must pay, and hand-somely too.

Having come to that decision, Hugh shuffled off cheerfully after the slouching crab-like fashion peculiar to persons whose boots have been constructed on the ventilating principle for a considerable period.

As he passed the Royal Oak he cast a longing glance at the glories of that busy bar; but his precious burden forbade loitering, so he pursued his way with heroic self-denial; not, however, before his unwashed face had caught the attention of a woman, who was standing near the door with an empty wine-glass in her hand, from which she had just tossed off a 'go of gin.' Swinging back the glass door, she hurried out, unnoticed by the clients—mostly omnibus drivers and conductors—of the Oak that night, and squeezing herself forcibly through the throng on the pavement, speedily reached the object of her pursuit.

'One would think as you were trainin' for a thousand miles' race, Bob,' exclaimed she, with a wheezy laugh, touching his sleeve. 'I shouldn't like to walk an hour alongside of you; not but what your comp'ny's pleasant enough.'

'Bless me, Mrs. Podmore, who'd have guessed I was going to have the pleasure of seeing your handsome face twice in one evening!' replied Hugh, alias Bob, appreciating his good luck with deliberation.

In the rank of life Maitland now frequented surnames are seldom heard, some personal defect or eccentricity usually supplying the requisite patronymic. Had you inquired for Hugh Maitland at any one of his chosen haunts, you would have been gravely assured that 'no toffs vosn't allowed there.' Had you demanded an interview with 'Bob Carrots,' you would, in all probability, have discovered that you were speaking to that eminent personage himself.

'My 'andsome face indeed!' panted Mrs. Podmore, scuttling along, Romæ faciamus sicut Romani! 'Wothever makes you in such a wast 'urry, my dear?'

'Don't you suppose anybody eats hot suppers except yourself?' with a sly grin. 'I'm all alone in the world, you see. There's no nice little woman frying my sausages for me, and getting things nice and comfortable; if I want to be snug, I've only got myself to look to.'

'All the better for you,' puffed Mrs. Podmore. 'I've no patience with you young men a-grizzlin' after wives and babies, and sechlike rubbidge. Why, there you are, as free as the larks in the blue sky, and freer, with nobody nor nothink to worrit you from mornin' till night. You should see what I do, and then p'r'aps you'd be a trifle more contented.'

Stout middle-aged wemen don't like progressing at the rate of five miles an hour. Bob, who had at first conceived the vile project of getting rid of his vivacious comrade by depriving her of breath, and consequently power of motion, here perceiving that her capabilities of 'staying' far exceeded his expectation, somewhat slackened his pace, and turning into Praed-street, remarked:

'But what brings you into the bosoms of so many respectable families? You hadn't much of a connection in that line when I first knew you.'

And they both laughed, as if a very good joke lay perdu somewhere.

'Times halter, young man,' said Mrs. Podmore, after a pause. 'My present ockipation is babies—babies at the birth—babies when they his put out to nuss, and ceterer. I takes 'em in hall stages, findin' they pays ekally well up to the last moment as the breath is hin their blessed little bodies. Sometimes too I gets a job nussin', and that's when I sees the struggles and sufferin's of them hunfortunate married men. But, lor! it's nasty troublesome work; and if it wasn't that I'm afraid of disobligin' my doctor, 'oo's a great fav'rite with hall the tiptop ladies, and 'oo gets me many a nice little case that way, I wouldn't never nuss nobody no more, as I've said 'undreds and 'undreds of times; but there, we must be haccommodatin' to each other in this world, mustn't we, Bob?'

'Certainly we must,' replied Bob.

During the voluble utterances of Mrs. Podmore he had been occupied in wondering why she clung to him in this obstinate way, and whether it might not be as well to let her have her say out.

They were old friends these two, and had had experience of each other's abilities before that night. Mr. Maitland's ultimate resolution announced itself in his next words:

'Won't you step in and take a snack with me, now that you have got so far? I can't quite come the sausages, but there's some first-rate boiled beef to be had at the cook-shop, and I'm flush of cash to-night for a marvel.'

Mrs. Podmore eyed him sharply, and compressed her lips, as

though she had made a discovery.

'Well, I don't know but what I will 'ave just a mouthful, afore I starts for 'ome,' answered she, at her leisure. 'Where are you a-goin' to?'

'Round the corner to the shop,' replied Bob, moving off. 'You go in and rest. First-floor front is my place—be back in a

minute.'

Mrs. Podmore took him at his word, and went up the dirty steps of the house before which they had halted, and in which Bob lodged. The street he patronised was situated on the Marylebone side of the Metropolitan Station, Edgware-road, and diverged on Lisson-grove.

Ragged squalor pervaded those miserable dwellings from basement to attic. Vice and misery throve apace throughout the quarter, but in no particular locality were they so redundant as in that

selected by Clemmie's brother as his place of residence.

Tawdry slatternly women loitered along the filthy pavement; hideous urchins capered and yelled unchecked in the road, whilst their gaunt unsexed mothers stood gossiping with their bare arms akimbo; the sellers of shell-fish made the night hideous with their discordant cries: all was confusion, filth, and poverty. But Mrs. Podmore did not suffer from nerves; no disgust was betrayed by her ample countenance as she betook herself to the scantily furnished gas-lit apartment indicated by her host.

Maintaining a due regard for fact, it could hardly be asserted that that gentleman habitually dwelt in the lap of luxury. An old mattress and rug, a deal table on three legs, a chair, a ricketty stool, and a fragment of a looking-glass on the mantelshelf, comprising

the heavy division of his household goods.

Mrs. Podmore sniffed about with her nose in the air, as though doubtful of the purity of the atmosphere, but I believe she was in reality intent on discovering the whereabouts of Bob's larder; for on catching sight of a cupboard door fastened by a wedge, she unfastened and flung it open without hesitation.

Nothing much to see there, Mrs. Podmore. A piece of dry bread, a screw of tobacco, a mug, a teacup without a handle, two

plates, and two old knives, that is all.

Just as she was about to make a trenchant remark anent the economy visible in her host's domestic arrangements, that gentleman returned, bearing in his arms the cheering harbingers of a plenteous feast, in the shape of a parcel, which from its greasy aspect suggested cold meat in slices, a new loaf, two bottles of Guinness, and, last not least, a good-sized clear glass bottle, filled to the cork with a limpid fluid, whereupon Mrs. Podmore gazed with lively interest.

'There!' exclaimed Bob triumphantly, 'that's what I call elevat-

ing; just you put your lips to that,' holding out the aforesaid bottle, 'and tell me if you ever tasted anything finer. It would put pluck into the heart of a new-born lamb;' and he heaped up his numerous

parcels in a heterogeneous mass on the little round table.

After sundry vehement protestations to the effect that she never touched a drop of spirit, except when she felt 'bad and low' (which I fear was not seldom), Mrs. Podmore thought she would 'just smell it,' to please an old friend, whereupon he turned his back on her and busied himself with the neater arrangement of his uninviting couch, possibly out of consideration for the delicate prejudices of a lady, possibly out of anxiety to get that shawl he carried under his arm stowed away safely.

This latter object effected, Mr. Maitland straightened himself up as Mrs. Podmore replaced the bottle on the table, after having smelt it to such good purpose that quite a sixth part of its contents

had been evaporated by the process.

'Clipping, ain't it?' said he, going to the cupboard, and returning with such table appurtenances as it was in his power to produce. 'O, you're no judge, aren't you? Ladies never are. Never mind, let's get to work on the beef. I'm as hungry as a lost dog, I can tell you. There, that's comfortable now,' cutting a second slice of bread. 'Why, I declare you make my little den look quite palatial. Not too much furniture, is there? Cool and airy. All the more room for your charms to shine, you see. Ah, I always was a ladies' man.'

Mrs. Podmore acknowledged the accuracy of this assertion by a jaunty little nod over her teacupful of stout; deglutition and speech not being compatible without grave inconvenience.

'Do you remember my old pal Billy Brownlow?' asked Bob,

when the business of the platter had somewhat slackened.

'Lor, yes. What's become of the great brute?' and Mrs. Pod-more cut herself a nobbly bit of crust.

'O, he's living at her Majesty's expense—got lagged for skimping flimsies. I always thought he would, he was such a fool,' returned Bob, stretching out his legs luxuriously, and sighing the sigh of the replete. 'Jolly it is to have a nice cosy chat together again. Let us drink to our frequent enjoyment of each other's society.'

'No, I couldn't, Bob, that I couldn't. Sperrits is against my rule; indeed, I seldom makes so free with stout as I 'ave to-night; not but what I'm much obliged, and rehechoes your wish to the full. I didn't think as you'd 'ave know'd me again,' with a furtive glance at the bottle.

'Faces like yours ain't so common that a man should forget them,' gravely rejoined Bob, with a sad shake of the head, as though he deplored the circumstance. 'As for me, I'm desperately gone to pieces, ain't I? Not anything like the smart chap I used to be.'

'P'r'aps a trifle thinner and holder,' said Mrs. Podmore, regarding him judicially; 'but you can't lose your hown style, Bob.'

'Yes, yes; a gentleman in rags is a gentleman still. I've suffered a good bit at one time and another, and it's told on me. I'm

melancholy-I'm fond of meditation-I'm a solitary man.'

But Mrs. Podmore had not scampered herself out of breath, and over-eaten herself to the verge of nightmare, merely to obtain a fuller knowledge of Mr. Maitland's psychological peculiarities. Determined on checking his egotism, and reducing him to sober fact forthwith, and aware that self-interest is the most potent of mental astringents, she remarked:

'I wonder if you'd believe me, if I told you I meant to do you a service?'

'The devil's got a good bit of pavement out of my friends of late,' laughed Bob; 'however, I do think you're rather better than the rest of 'em. Suppose you let me wash out your teacup,' with

subtle persuasion.

Mrs. Podmore succumbed to the force of circumstance with a meek resignation strengthening to behold; likewise on the cup being filled with neat gin, she took the precaution of instantly swallowing the cheering cordial, lest it should be spilt; then she observed, as Bob leisurely sipped his quantum:

'My business gives me many a chance with the swells, you

see.'

'I dare say,' yawned Bob, perceiving a tendency in his visitor to wander from the point. 'Have another thimbleful?'

'Not for worlds!' with quite majestic firmness. 'I know when

I've 'ad enough, thank Heavings.'

'I never knew that happen to me,' responded Bob placidly, helping himself. 'Come!'

'The very littlest drop, then!'

'Ah, I thought you'd relent. "Woman's great in weakness"—who says that? Your health, old lady.'

Mrs. Podmore nodded smilingly over her replenished bowl.

'I dare say you finds it dull 'ere at times,' remarked she, after

a pause, looking about her.

'You may well say so; an ungrateful society has condemned me to pass the halcyon days of my youth after the fashion of a frozenup bear. I suck my own paws, so to speak. I feed on memory, and the process isn't fattening. There are more of the mute inglorious sort in this world than a reckless age cares to remember.'

The cockles of Bob's heart being warmed, his mental horizon became enlarged, and he rose to those heights of oratorical excellence which had before now procured him bed and board from more than

one admiring landlord of a roadside inn.

'You hain't one of the mute sort with the gals though, I'll war-

rant,' said Mrs. Podmore jocularly. She too felt all the better for a second application.

'You awake my frigid heart,' smiled Bob, laying his hand on

a large tatter in his waistcoat.

'None so frigid either,' sagely; 'you see I caught you hout to-night. You can't go and call on a pretty young lady right under my nose, and I guess nothink,' with an astute tug of the shawl.

Bob straightened himself up with surprising celerity.

'What do you mean?' he inquired.

'I like your slyness—I do. Just as if you didn't know I meant Miss Maitland.'

'Hum!' A meaningful and emphatic 'Hum.' 'And what if

I do know Miss Maitland?' coolly, after a pause.

'Well, you must 'ave a good bit of influence with 'er, to make bold to wisit 'er in your hold clothes, just hany ways, no'ows,' replied the wardrobe woman with a gravity and decision which proved her words to be the result of serious reflection.

'You're a sharp one,' was all Bob's answer.

'Pore little soul!' remarked Mrs. Podmore, 'she's got 'er troubles. I don't believe she could 'ave 'ad more nor five pounds in 'er pocket when I saw 'er to-day; and that's a mere song when you considers hall 'er expenses,' watching him keenly.

'As much as that!' he muttered. 'What an ass I am!'

'She might 'ave 'ad more,' continued the wily woman, 'but I don't fancy that she's been paid for the last concert as she played at; at least, I know she complained to me yesterday, when she sold me a dress, 'ow slow them musical sort was in settlin' hup.'

'But she will get paid?' said Bob quickly.

'Certainly she will.'

They both laughed.

'Well, well,' added Mrs. Podmore, 'I'm sorry for 'er. She's set 'er 'eart on one as'll do 'er no good.'

'Ha!' ejsculated Mr. Maitland. 'Well, I shouldn't wonder if she looked in here before long. Don't let me hurry you, though.'

But Mrs. Podmore was already on her feet. She was anything but desirous of claiming Bob as a friend in the presence of Miss Maitland.

Arming herself with her black bag and umbrella, she made rapidly for the door.

'Good-night,' exclaimed she. 'It's gettin' late, and I've some way to go. Maybe we shall meet again soon.'

'I hope so.'

'And mind you don't make a fool of yourself!'

Mr. Maitland shook his head, and leant back comfortably in his chair. His salad days were, he flattered himself, what a close observer might call, well over.

# THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF A CROWN AND SCEPTRE

CELEBRATED jewels have, in all ages and countries, been the subject of romantic story, and certainly the ancient Crown jewels of Scotland are no exception. True, no Scottish Colonel Blood ever attempted to purloin them, so far as history records; but though never stolen, like St. Edward's crown from the Tower, the regalia of the Northern Kingdom have nevertheless a very curious and eventful history of their own. It was their fate to be secretly conveyed out of the Scottish capital to a remote part of the country for their greater safety during the civil wars of the Commonwealth; removed again clandestinely for a similar reason, they were hidden away for a considerable period in the secret recesses of a 'double-bottom bed' in a country manse, to be once more smuggled and concealed for years beneath the pulpit of a parish church. Then, too, long afterwardsthey had been restored in the mean time—these national relics were to remain a missing treasure for more than a century. The circumstances connected with these several events are not generally known, and are worth relating; but at the outset let us briefly describe the jewels themselves.

The chief interest of a visit to Edinburgh Castle centres in two little rooms situated in the south-east corner of that picturesque fortress. They form a portion of the old palace, partly built by Mary Stuart in 1565 and partly in 1616. In the one room, an irregularly-shaped apartment about eight feet square only, and lighted by a small window, the unfortunate Queen gave birth to James VI. on the 19th of June 1566. Adjoining it is the crown-room, of similar dimensions. It is fitted with crimson hangings tastefully disposed: the roof is vaulted and ornamented with groined woodwork, and the apartment is kept lighted by four lamps. The different objects are placed on an oval table in the middle of the little chamber, and are securely protected against possible pilferers by an iron cage, after the fashion of the crown-room in the Tower. On a square cushion of crimson velvet, fringed with gold, and having a gold tassel at each corner, lies the imperial crown of Scotland. It is surrounded by the sceptre, the sword of state, with its scabbard, and the Lord Treasurer's mace or rod of office.

The crown is of pure gold, and very elegantly formed. The under part is a golden diadem consisting of two circles, chased and adorned with twenty-one precious stones. The upper circle is surmounted by crosses fleury, interchanged with fleurs-de-lis, and with

twenty small points, adorned with the like number of diamonds and sapphires, the points being topped with as many costly pearls. This is said to have been the ancient form of the crown of Scotland since the league made between Achaius, King of Scots, and Charles the Great of France. It has also been referred to the era of Bruce, and with much more probability. The crown of Achaius must have been a very rude ornament, if, indeed, there ever was such a monarch. He is supposed to have flourished about the year 787. How long he reigned, or what manner of ruler he was, is not recorded. cording to the legend,' Achaius was succeeded by his son Alpine, who was beheaded, with many of his nobles, by the Picts in the year 831. Alpine in turn was succeeded by his son Kenneth II., surnamed MacAlpine. This ruler revenged the murder of his father by defeating the Picts and slaying their king; the result being that the Scots and Picts were henceforward united under one sceptre, and Kenneth became the first sole monarch of all Scotland about the year 843. What is more certain, however, is that to this crown James V. added two concentric arches of gold, crossing and intersecting each other above the circles, and surmounted by a ball or globe, over which rises a cross patée adorned with diamonds. In the centre of the cross patée is an amethyst, which points the front of the crown behind; on the other side is a large pearl, and below this are the initials I.R.V. The bonnet or tiara is of crimson velvet turned up with ermine—an innovation this of James VII.—this portion of the crown having originally been of purple velvet, which, however, had become much decayed during the concealment of the regalia in the time of the civil war. Four superb pearls, each the size of a pea, These are usually said to be Scottish pearls; but adorn the tiara. as they lack the slightly blue tinge which generally characterises pearls found in Scotland, it seems more likely that they are Oriental The other precious stones in the crown, in addition to between twenty and thirty small pearls set in the circlet, are diamonds, jacinths, garnets, chrysoberyls, and amethysts. The emeralds are doublets, and the sapphires are imitated in enamel. The crown measures about nine inches in diameter, twenty-seven inches in circumference, and about six inches and a half in height from the bottom of the lower circle to the top of the cross.

The sceptre is a slender rod of silver of hexagonal form, thirty-four inches long, and richly chased with fleurs-de-lis and thistles. It is surmounted by an antique capital of embossed leaves, upon the abacus of which are three small figures representing the Virgin Mary, St. Andrew, and St. James, over whose heads rises a crystal globe two inches and a quarter in diameter. This is surmounted by a smaller oval globe, topped with an Oriental pearl half an inch in diameter. The figure of the Virgin is crowned with an open crown, in her right hand is the infant Saviour, and in her left she holds a

cross. St. Andrew is in apostolical garments, but the sculptor has thought it fitting to place a Scottish bonnet on the head of the patron-saint of Scotland. In his right hand he holds a cross partly broken, and in his left an open book. Also in apostolical dress, though wearing a hat like the Roman pilum, is St. James, who holds in his right hand an open book, in his left a pastoral staff with the head broken off. Between each statuette rises a rullion in the form of a dolphin, beautifully executed, while underneath are the letters I.R.V. With this sceptre the Lord Chancellor of Scotland touched the Acts of Parliament in token of the royal assent.

The sword of state is very elegant, both in form and proportion. It is five feet long, the handle and pommel being of silver gilt, and fifteen inches in length. The cross or guard, also of silver, is seventeen and a half inches long, and is wreathed in imitation of two dolphins with their heads joining, and their tails ending in acorns. On the blade of the weapon are the letters in gold 'Julius II. P.' The scabbard is of crimson velvet adorned with filagree work of silver, representing boughs and leaves of oak with acorns. It has four silver plates, two of which are in blue enamel, and bear the letters in gold 'Julius II. Pon. Max. N.' An oak-tree in fruit was the armorial bearing of this Pontiff, who gifted the sword to James IV. It was wrought in Italy shortly after the revival of the arts, and is undoubtedly a beautiful piece of workmanship.

The last monarch who used the Scottish crown was Charles II.. on whose head it was placed at Scone a few months previous to the disastrous battle of Worcester in 1651. When Cromwell and his 'Ironsides' invaded the Northern Kingdom, the friends of royalty there naturally became alarmed for the safety of their regalia. Without loss of time the national treasures were accordingly packed up and hurried off to Dunnottar Castle, some hundred miles north of the Scottish capital, upon which Oliver's undaunted troops were meantime making rapid strides. Dunnottar, anciently the seat of the Keiths, Earls Marischal, stands upon an isolated rock near the pleasant town of Stonehaven, on the east coast of Scotland, and about fifteen miles south of Aberdeen. The area of the castle measures about four acres, and is separated from the land by a deep chasm, the only approach being by a steep path winding round the body of the rock. Dismantled soon after the rebellion of 1715, on the attainder of the Keith family, the place is now a picturesque ruin, an object of interest to the artist and the antiquary; but at the period of which we write it was deemed the strongest fortress in the country. Hence it was selected for the preservation of the Crown jewels. Early in November 1651, two months subsequent to the affair of Worcester, Cromwell's troops, having already reduced every other stronghold in Scotland, suddenly appeared before Dunnottar and summoned it to surrender. Earl Marischal, the governor

of the castle, had gone to join the king's forces in England. In his absence, Ogilvy of Barras, a neighbouring proprietor, was appointed deputy-governor. Under this resolute officer the garrison made a desperate resistance to the English army. For more than six months the Scottish royalists withstood the besiegers, but were at length compelled by famine to surrender. Shortly before the capitulation, however, Ogilvy had, by a bold stratagem, managed to satisfactorily dispose of the regalia. The affair was managed thus: One day the wife of the Rev. Mr. Granger, parish minister of Kinneff, requested permission of Major-General Morgan, who commanded the besieging army, to visit her friend Mrs. Ogilvy in the fortress. Nothing doubting, the gallant officer granted the lady's request. The friends then and there proceeded to wrap up the crown in a small bundle of clothes which was secreted in Mrs. Granger's dress. and sceptre were then concealed 'in a bag of flax,' which was placed on the back of the lady's servant. In this way the insignia were carried out of the castle; and, if we may believe an old writer, the English General, little suspecting the trick that was being played upon him, 'politely assisted the minister's wife to mount her horse.' With all speed, we may be sure, did Mrs. Granger and her domestic make their way to the manse of Kinneff some miles distant. Here, 'in a double-bottom bed,' the national relics were carefully hid away.

General Morgan's soldiers were now masters of Dunnottar. What had become of the regalia? In order to divert the enemy's suspicion into a false channel, the Countess of Marischal spread a report that they had been carried abroad by Sir John Keith, her younger son,-an unlikely thing, thought the English General, who immediately arrested Ogilvy of Barras, and sent him to England, where the unlucky deputy-governor was imprisoned for a number of Suspicion never fell upon the good folks of Kinneff; but 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' and Mr. and Mrs. Granger felt uneasy enough in having the diadem of Scotland in their 'double-Could no securer place be found for it out of their bottom bed.' possession, and still in their possession? After due cogitation it was decided by the parson and his wife to bury this terrible white elephant beneath the pulpit of the kirk adjoining, which was accordingly done; and in this novel hiding-place the crown and sceptre of Scotland, with the sword of state, remained undisturbed for nine years—that is, until the Restoration in 1660, when they were delivered to Mr. George Ogilvy (who had now obtained his release from prison), and were by him restored to his royal master Charles. The Merry Monarch rewarded all the persons connected with this affair, but—as often happens in the case of rewards as well as punishments in this world—in inverse ratio to their deserts. Sir John Keith, who had no real share in the transaction, was created Earl of Kintore and Knight Marischal of Scotland, with a salary of 400l. a year; Ogilvy, whose patrimonial estate had been impoverished by the fines and sequestrations imposed by the English, received the merely honorary reward of a baronetcy; while honest Mrs. Granger was rewarded with the modest sum of 2000 marks Scots.

We hear nothing more of the Crown jewels until 1707. March of that year they were deposited in a huge old oak chest in the room in which they are now shown, the union of the two kingdoms, so unpopular in Scotland when first broached, taking place on the first of May following. William Earl Marischal, Lord Keith and Altrie, Grand Marshal of Scotland, was appointed heritable keeper of the sacred but now useless trinkets; and, by the Act ratifying the Union, it is stipulated and agreed by both Parliaments that they shall continue to be kept within the kingdom of Scotland in all time coming, notwithstanding the Union. But it is added, 'and in case the Government shall find the transportation of the regalia from Edinburgh Castle to any other secure place within the kingdom at any time hereafter necessary, that the same may not be done until instruction be given to Earl Marischal, and his successors, to the effect his lordship or they may attend and see them safely transported and securely lodged.' It is not very probable that the time will ever come when the Government will be under the necessity of seeking for a securer place for the insignia of Scottish royalty than that in which they are now deposited. regalia remained so long immured in the old room of the castle that people began to doubt whether they were actually there. Arnot, in his History of Edinburgh, written about 1780, remarks, dubiously, that 'in one apartment of the castle, called the crownroom, it is pretended that the regalia of Scotland are deposited: that they were lodged there with much formality on the 26th of March 1707 is certain; whether they be still there is problematical. If they be, nothing at least can be more absurd than the way in which they have been kept. . . . Since the regalia were deposited, no governor of the castle, upon his admission, has made inquiry if they were left secure by his predecessor, no mortal has been known to have seen them.' In the year 1794 an attempt seems to have been made to dispel the disquieting rumours that had taken possession of the Scottish mind on the subject. The commissioners appointed by royal warrant made a search of the apartment, but, being apparently in some doubt as to the extent of their powers, they would not order the chest which was supposed to contain the relics to be opened. This had the effect of making the people more sceptical than ever, and, indeed, it was now the general belief that the insignia were not to be found. Had not Edward I. carried off to England the sacred stone of Scone, on which the Scottish kings were crowned? What more likely than that some Southern loon, say 'the butcher' Cumberland, in the stirring times

of '45, should have surreptitiously made away with the Scottish crown itself? Under some such dread conviction did Scotsmen labour until so late as 1818. Chiefly on the representation of Sir Walter Scott, a special commission was appointed by the Prince Regent, in order to clear away the doubts that had for so long perplexed our Northern friends. On the 4th of February of that year the commissioners proceeded to the crown-room; the large oak chest was with some difficulty forced open, and the longlost relics were discovered to be safe and sound. Moreover, in addition to the crown, sceptre, and sword of state, there was found what was not in the inventory, a silver rod of office, of elegant workmanship, and which is believed to be that of the Lord Treasurer. The royal standard was immediately hoisted on the castle, and the discovery was celebrated by a general rejoicing in 'mine own romantic town.' Shortly afterwards the crown-room was fitted up for the free exhibition to the public of these sacred symbols of Scottish independence, along with a few other royal relics added, we believe, in 1830, and the famous old oak chest which had kept its secret for so long.

'For this diadem,' eloquently remarks Dr. Robert Chambers,

'did Bruce liberate his country; with it his son nearly occasioned It purchased for Scotland the benefit of the mature sagacity of Robert II.; did not save Robert III. from a death of grief; procured, perhaps, the assassination of James I.; instigated

James IV. to successful rebellion against his father, whose violent death was expiated by his own. Its dignity was proudly increased by James V., who was yet more unfortunate, perhaps, in his end than a long list of unfortunate predecessors. It was worn by the devoted head of Mary, who found it the occasion of woes and calamities unnumber d and unexampled. It was placed upon the infant brow of her son, to the exclusion of herself from all its glories and advantages, but not to the conclusion of the distresses in which it had involved her. Her unfortunate grandson, for its sake, visited Scotland, and had it placed upon his head with magnificent ceremonies; but the nation, whose sovereignty it gave him, was the first to rebel against his authority and work his destruction. Presbyterian solemnity with which it was given to Charles II. was only a preface to the disasters of Worcester; and afterwards it was remembered by this monarch, little to the advantage of Scotland, that it had been placed upon his head with conditions and restrictions which wounded at once his pride and his conscience. It was worn by no other monarch, and the period of its disuse seems to have been the epoch from which we may reckon the happiness of our monarch and the revival of our national prosperity.'

ROBERT KEMPT.

# THE SONG OF THE RINKERS

HARKEN to the Rinkers rolling round the Rink! How their axles clatter! How their castors clink! Wheeling in a giddy maze, darting in and out, They're 'circular' and 'fugitive' beyond the range of doubt.

Chorus: Sing a song of Rinkers! How merrily they skim!
Birds were made for flying, and fish were made to swim.
Now we've found the motion fit for humankind;
Man to roll on castors plainly was design'd.

Gliding o'er the asphalte at a rapid rate; Taking it for ice too—fancying they skate; With each other flirting, waggishly they wink: O, the rosy Rinkers rolling round the Rink!

Chorus: Sing a song of Rinkers, &c.

Here and there and everywhere, in and out they dash; Rinking's most delightful when there comes a crash. Sympathy is catching, when Fanny's boot's unlaced— Willie's arm encircles his Arabella's waist.

Chorus: Sing a song of Rinkers, &c.

In the day of danger, when the clouds arise, Dark'ning all your sunshine, shrouding all your skies, Never take to weeping, never pause to think; Buckle on your castors and begin to rink!

Chorus: Sing a song of Rinkers, &c.

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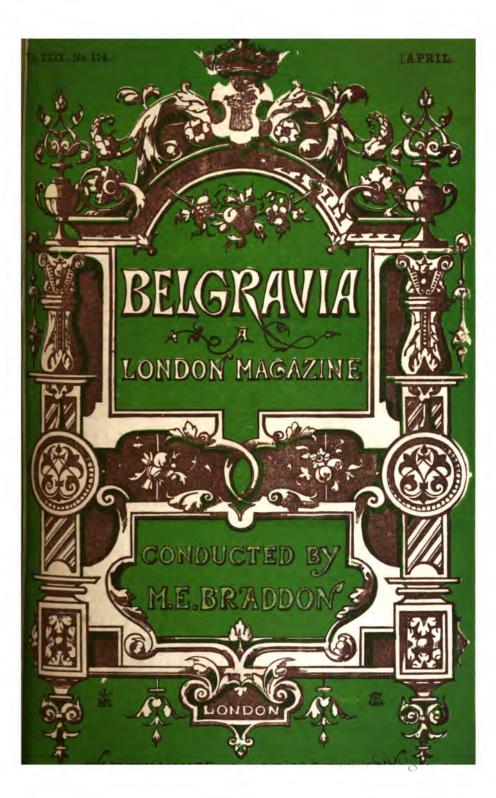
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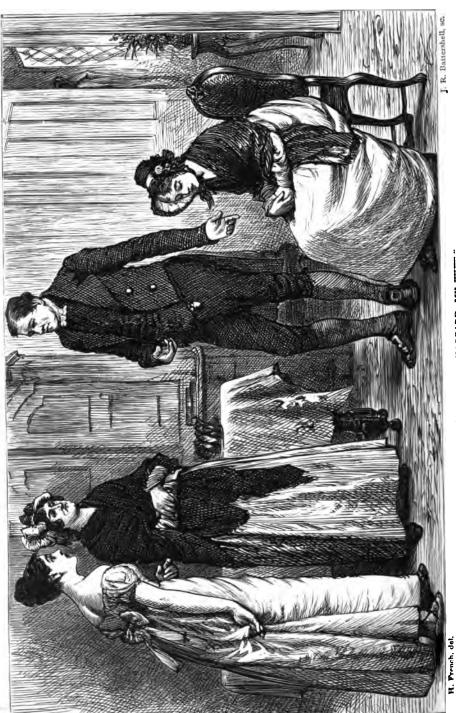
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# BELGRAVIA

APRIL 1876

# JOSHUA HAGGARD'S DAUGHTER

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XI, 'WE ARE IN LOVE'S LAND TO-DAY,'

SLEEPLESS night shed the sober light of reason upon those clouds of sentiment which had obscured Miss Priscilla Webling's mind. 'When all is done,' said Reason, 'you know but too well that you had no hope of having Joshua for a husband, suitable as might have been such an union, blessed as you might have made his days by your cherishing and ministration. You know yourself a creature especially adapted to be an Independent minister's wife; but his eyes have been blinded to that fact: he could not pierce the modest veil in which maidenhood enfolded you, and discern the image of the perfect wife behind it. His mind—too much given to spiritual things to be acute upon earthly matters-has been caught by the surface beauty of a foolish child. It is for you to pity rather than resent an error for which he will doubtless pay dearly when he lies down in damp sheets, or drinks tea made with half-boiled water, or eats potatoes as hard as stones, and suffers in various other ways from the mistakes of an inexperienced housekeeper; to say nothing of the likelihood that so young a wife may be dressy and flighty, and given to standing at her door of afternoons gossiping, to the neglect of the housework.'

Thus counselled by reason, Priscilla assisted at the seven-o'clock breakfast with a tranquil demeanour, and even smiled upon Joshua with an assumed cheerfulness, which had some element of the heroic.

'I hope you do not think my choice foolish or blameworthy,' said Joshua meekly, as Deborah helped him to fried potatoes and bacon.

'Indeed, dear Mr. Haggard, marriage is such a serious consideration—and a second marriage, where there are grown-up children, more particularly—that I don't feel qualified to form an opinion.

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Cynthia is a good girl, as girls go; that I should be sorry to deny, after the way she nursed me through my quinsey last winter. But there's a wide difference between a servant-girl and a minister's wife, and a great deal will be expected of her in that position.'

- 'I am not afraid,' said Joshua, 'if I can but make her happy. In the innocence of her heart she has given me her love. God give me grace to keep and strengthen that affection in the days to come!'
- 'She has so much reason to be grateful to you,' began Priscilla.
- 'I am not talking of gratitude,' interrupted Joshua almost angrily. 'She has given me her love. I know not why I am so blessed; but I know that she loves me. It is the rich reward of all my days of care and toil. I have not felt my labour heavy. I have no foolish pride in my work; but the sum of it has perhaps been pleasing in the sight of Heaven, and this reward has been granted to me—love and renewed youth, a life that seems beginning again from the starting-point of twenty years. I feel as young as on the day I first preached in Penmoyle—before there was a chapel here—on the bit of green waste at the opening of the lane that leads to Mr. Pamble's farm.'

'That was four-and-twenty years ago,' said Deborah; 'for it was the very year father died, and sister and I walked through the dusty lanes in our new mourning to hear you.'

This, to Deborah's mind, was almost equal in self-sacrifice to

walking over red-hot ploughshares.

'It was before we opened the school,' said Priscilla, 'and when folks were recommending us to take situations as housekeepers, instead of profiting by our education.'

'I feel as young as I felt that day-four-and-twenty years ago,'

exclaimed Joshua triumphantly.

This was an intoxication of the mind which seemed to the Miss Weblings fraught with peril. It was a positive duty to say some-

thing depressing.

- 'Ah,' sighed Priscilla, 'if poor Mrs. Haggard could have looked forward to this in her long illness, she would have felt it trying. It's a blessing that we're not permitted to see into the future.'
- 'I am not going to act hastily,' said Joshua, ignoring this dismal suggestion. 'I thought it my duty to tell you my intentions without delay; but I shall tell no one else yet awhile, not even my son and daughter. I shall leave Cynthia with you for some time longer. She shall have time for reflection—many peaceful days in which to consider the promise she has made me. If any change should come to her mind, if she should discover that she has been mistaken in her feelings towards me, I shall be ready to set her

free. It will need but a word from her to loosen the bond between us. I shall tell her this before we part. If she hold steadfast to her promise of last night, I shall come back to fetch her before this year is ended. Meanwhile I know that you will be kind to her, and that she will be happy with you.'

'We have always tried to do our duty by her,' returned Deborah

rather stiffly.

She could not quite forgive Mr. Haggard for his absurd choice, when the superior mind of her sister had been lying open before him for these last twenty years like a wise and valuable book, and he had not had the sense to read it.

'I'm afraid she'll be puffed up by the change in her prospects,' suggested Priscilla, 'and not so obedient and dutiful as she has been. We can hardly expect it of her under the circumstances.'

'I do not think you will find any difference,' said Joshua. 'She

is sincerely grateful to you for your goodness to her.'
'Yes; but in our case her gratitude does not turn into love,'

retorted Priscilla sharply.

Cynthia brought in the tea-kettle to make the tea, and took it out again to be kept on the boil on the kitchen-hob, with a meekness which seemed to give the lie to her mistresses' doubts; and presently, when Joshua had finished his breakfast and went out to the kitchen to bid his newly-betrothed good-bye, he found her scrubbing the deal-table with vigorous industry, which had brought a vivid pink to the fair young face.

She put down the scrubbing-brush, and he took her in his arms and kissed her—with a kiss which was fatherly in its protecting

gentleness, lover-like in its suppressed passion.

'Dearest love,' he said softly, holding her in his embrace all the while, and looking down at her with tender seriousness, 'I am going to leave you for a few months. I am going away, dear, so that you may look into your heart and be very sure the love you talked of last night is real, and not a childish fancy which may melt away like the memory of a dream when we awake. In our sleep we wander in a beautiful garden, and clasp the hand of a friend—loved and dead, perhaps, long ago; and in the morning we awake, and there is nothing left of our dream—hardly a memory. Your love for me might be like that, Cynthia.'

'No, no,' she answered eagerly, looking up into his eyes,—'no

it is real, like your goodness, like your wisdom.'

'I am old enough to be your father, Cynthia. I have a daughter older than you.'

'What has that to do with it? I did not think about your age when I began to love you.'

'When did you begin to do that, sweet one?'

'When you went away from here I felt that there was some-

thing gone out of my life, and I knew that I liked you very much. But perhaps I might never have known that I loved you if—'

She stopped, blushing deeply, and trifling with the lapel of his

coat.

- 'If what, dearest?'
- 'I don't like to tell you; it is so foolish.'
- 'Please tell me, dear.'
- 'Young Mr. Price, at the Rising Sun, wanted to be my sweetheart. He used to wait for me coming out of chapel of an evening, and follow me across the street, and stop me at the garden-gate talking to me. And when he talked about loving me and wanting to marry me, I hated him dreadfully; and then I knew that I loved you.'
- 'And I hope you made Mr. Price quite understand that you didn't care for him?'
- 'O yes; I told him so very plainly, and he was rather offended, and Miss Priscilla said I was very foolish to refuse so good an offer. But you've no idea how I hated him when he talked about being fond of me.'
- 'God bless you, darling, and good-bye till I come back to fetch my young wife, or till you write me one little line to say you have changed your mind.'

'I shall never write that,' replied Cynthia with conviction.

And with these words they kissed once more and parted, Joshua setting out on his homeward journey with the light heart of youth, weaving visions of his happy future as he walked in the briar-scented lanes, painting pictures of that familiar home which was soon to be beautified by Cynthia's sweet presence. It seemed to him that he had never known what beauty and grace in woman meant before he found that wanderer on the sunburnt common—before he looked down on those loose locks of palest gold, and saw the white feet gleaming under dark water, the delicate figure half-sitting, half-reclining on the grassy hillock with the listless grace of repose.

He speculated how he could make the old home a little brighter for its new mistress. That dingy carpet in the common parlour must be exchanged for a new one. He would buy a harpsichord or one of those new pianos people talked about, and Cynthia could learn to play hymn-tunes. He would buy a gig or a four-wheeled chaise to drive his wife in, instead of the tax-cart. When Jim got steadier and married—events which ought to happen within the next half-dozen years—Joshua told himself that he might retire from the grocery business altogether, and devote himself exclusively to the chapel. There was a cottage on the slope of the hill at the upper end of Combhollow which he fancied would be a charming home for himself and his young wife—a romantic cottage, with a garden in which some ambitious tenant had made a fountain. It

seemed to the lover's fancy that this cottage, with its fountain and weeping-ash, was better adapted as a background to his picture of Cynthia than the substantial commonplace old house opposite the First and Last. Yet it would go against him to leave the old house. His father and mother had lived and died there. It was his first idea of home. No; if Cynthia were satisfied, he would stay there. And that cottage with the fountain was probably damp. Picturesqueness and rheumatism often go together.

And Judith? How would that tight-waisted, tight-lipped damsel get on with a lovely young wife? Judith must be taught to bridle that sharp tongue of hers, to put the curb on her quick temper.

There must be no biting blasts to wither his tender flower.

'I shall make Judith understand at once and for ever that she must be kind and gentle to my wife,' thought Joshua. 'She has always respected and obeyed me — I am bound to remember that.'

He was in no hurry to tell Judith, or even his faithful Naomi, of the change that had come upon his life—that startling and wondrous change which had made him a new man. It would be time enough when he took his young wife home. No one had any right to question his choice or to doubt his wisdom.

He felt somewhat embarrassed, notwithstanding these arguments, when Naomi questioned him, with a dutiful interest in all his doings, about the girl he had found on Springfield Common.

'Has she been well-behaved, father? Has she learned to read yet?'

'Yes, my dear. She has made wonderful progress.'

'And is she as pretty as when you first saw her sitting with her feet in the water, and with her hair falling loose about her shoulders?'

Naomi's fancy had pictured the scene; her father's dark face looking down at the fair-haired wanderer; the thymy hillocks and gorse-bushes and wild broom under the blue warm sky.

'I think she is even prettier.'

'What a sweet little thing she must be! I should so like to see her! If Sally were to get married now, we might have Cynthia for a servant, mightn't we, father?'

'There's not much chance of that, Naomi.'

'Of Sally's marrying? I'm not sure of that,' replied Naomi.
'I know she has thoughts of it.'

'You shall see Cynthia some day, Naomi, and I hope you will learn to love her; but it will not be as a servant. Nature has made her fit for something better than servitude. I do not mean to say that service is not worthy, or that all men and women are not equal in the eyes of their Maker. But Nature has set a mark upon us all, and we have each our appointed station. I do not think Cynthia

was created to work like Sally, or to take pleasure in the things that please Sally.'

'You might get her a better place, father—as lady's-maid, for

instance.'

'To be some fine lady's drudge! That would be worse rather than better. Don't concern yourself about her, my dear, till you come to know more of her. I have made up my mind as to her future life.'

'How good you are, father, to take so much trouble for a poor nameless orphan.'

'There is more selfishness than goodness in the matter, Naomi.

It has been a pleasure to me to do as much for her.'

This was all that he said to his daughter about Cynthia; but he was pleased to think that Naomi had shown a friendly interest in the subject, and he fancied that Cynthia's beauty and Cynthia's sweetness would at once appeal to the girl's heart; that it would be natural for these two to love one another, and that they would cleave to each other like sisters. It never occurred to him that Cynthia, as the recipient of his charity, was quite a different person in the eyes of Naomi from the same Cynthia as his second wife; and that in proportion to his daughter's love for him would be her disinclination to divide his affection with a new-comer and interloper. In the fulness of his content, which inclined him to see all things on the sunnier side, he could foresee no domestic difficulty, unless it were a little extra snappishness on the part of Judith, an exhibition of temper which he meant to put down with a high hand.

He was very happy. It seemed as if his capacity for full and perfect happiness had never been called into play till now. His life had been prosperous, successful; but the rainbow hues of joy had not entered largely into the fabric of his existence. A gleam of vivid colour here and there had flashed across the dull gray woof; but now warp and woof were all brightness and colour. He saw all things under an altered aspect, apparelled in the beauty of a dream. Nature, which he had viewed hitherto with a mild regard, moved him now to loving worship. He thanked God for having set him in so fair a world, for having given him such a goodly heritage. In his daily walks he was continually repeating to himself those psalms which breathe joyfulness and thanksgiving, those canticles which tell of triumph and rapture for the Lord's chosen people. There was more eloquence in his sermons, more fervour in his prayers. His congregation even felt stirred by that strong floodtide of joy which filled his own breast.

In this state of mind he was naturally disposed to look with an indulgent eye upon Oswald Pentreath's wooing. He remembered with a guilty sheepishness what the Squire had said to him—that if

he, Joshua, were going to be married he would not be for such long delay; and moved by this recollection he told Oswald one evening in the Wilderness that, if he liked, the wedding might take place early in the year—say in March, when the spring flowers were coming in and the days getting bright.

'Now that your father has given his consent there is less reason for me to hold you to the letter of your promise,' said Joshua. 'If you are quite sure of your affection for Naomi—quite sure she is the one woman you would choose for yourself out of all the world—it makes little difference whether you marry her in March or July.'

'There is no fear of any change in my feelings,' answered Oswald; 'I love her better every day, and honour her more as I get to know her better. She is the noblest and best of women. I feel myself small and weak in comparison with her.'

Oswald lost no time in telling Naomi that the length of his apprenticeship, as it pleased him to call it, had been lessened.

"We are to be married early in March, Naomi, when the woods are yellow with daffodils; and you are coming to brighten that dismal old house of ours. I shall be a respectable married man by midsummer. I must get my father to buy me a gig, and put Herne into harness, so that I may drive you about. We shall be a regular Darby and Joan."

Naomi blushed at an imaginary picture of herself sitting beside Oswald in a high-wheeled gig, with that unreliable horse swaying the vehicle against banks and hedges, and making wild bolts round awkward corners. The idea of driving with her husband in a gig like old married people seemed to bring their marriage closer home to her than any gush of poetry on the lover's part could have done.

'And we must think of smartening the old rooms a little bit before you come to us,' continued Oswald cheerily. 'I daresay a coat of whitewash for the ceilings will be about as much as the Squire will care to afford; but I must see what Phœbe—that's our old housemaid, you know—can do with a few yards of chintz and muslin. She's a capital manager, poor old thing, and has made her elbow-bones twice their natural size with rubbing the panelling and furniture. There's no such polish in Devonshire, I should think, as poor Phœbe's elbow-grease. I see her at it sometimes at six o'clock in the morning when I'm going for an early ride; and I often wonder why she takes so much out of herself to embellish rooms that hardly any one sees. I fancy it must be a part of her religion. There are Jumpers, you know, and Shakers; perhaps there is a sect of Rubbers—an extra devout sect, like the Essenes.'

Naomi looked disapprovingly here. As a dissenter herself she was not prepared to think lightly of even Shakers or Jumpers, who had doubtless some reason for the faith that was in them—an innate

conviction of truth, perhaps, so strong as to counterbalance the ridiculousness of their outward manifestations.

'But when you come the old oak panels will have their use,' said Oswald gaily. 'They will serve as mirrors to reflect your imperial beauty. I always fancy you like the good Agrippinas and Julias, Naomi. There were one or two virtuous Julias, you know, though the majority turned their attention the other way; and there may have been a decent Agripina, though there I'm doubtful. I always picture you as a Roman lady, with golden embroidery on your robes, and a golden diadem on that dark hair of yours.'

Naomi had read neither Tacitus nor Gibbon; all she knew about Rome was that St. Paul had acquired the Roman franchise, and that the Romans had persecuted the early Christians. But she knew that Oswald meant to praise her beauty when he likened her to these imperial ladies of doubtful character.

These two also were very happy, but with a more quiet joy than The bloom of novelty had been worn off their love by They had grown accustomed to look forward to a life this time. spent together; to think of themselves as bound to each other. Oswald surveyed his future with a tranquil contentment. He liked Naomi better every day, leaned upon her more entirely, felt her superiority and his own weaker nature, and looked forward confidently to the part she was to play in his life. Naomi's feelings lay deeper, and but seldom found expression in words. speak playfully of a love which was the most solemn element in her She thought of her happiness - of this most perfect boon Heaven had given her in Oswald's love-with a subdued sense of awe. If he had never loved her; if he were to be taken from her? She dared not picture to herself the hideous blank which life must have been in the first case, nor the gloomy ruin life must become in the second. Sometimes she recalled that dreadful day when the storm had swept over Combhollow and her father's strong arm had snatched Oswald from the greedy devouring waves. If he had not been saved, and she had never known him! She was not metaphysician enough to contemplate life under such seemingly impossible conditions.

Aunt Judith's attitude of mind in relation to the lovers was one of equable disapprobation. She thought that Joshua was sacrificing to Baal by giving his daughter five thousand pounds in order that the misguided young woman might be raised from her proper position in life to a station for which Providence had never intended her. Five thousand pounds at five per cent meant two hundred and fifty pounds a year, Judith reflected, or nearly five pounds a week, which division made the money seem a great deal more, as it was thus brought nearer the housewife's eye. Why the entire housekeeping

expenses of Mr. Haggard's establishment—after debiting all goods had out of the shop against the house—seldom came to more than five pounds a week. And Joshua was to surrender all that money to make his daughter a fine lady.

The idea of this monetary sacrifice weighed heavily upon aunt She had begun a system of small economies as a kind of set-off against Naomi's dowry. Puddings now only graced the board thrice a week, and those were puddings of the homeliest and least expensive character; puddings of a substantial and filling character specially dear to prudent housekeepers, as they do not require eggs in their composition, and are for the most part independent of butter. The tea-table was furnished even more sparingly than of old, and, with a view to the economising of butter, the careful manager pressed upon the maturer taste of her nephew and niece that thick and slab molasses which their childish fancies had affected. She doled out the week's allowance of soap more grudgingly than of old, and was a despot in the matter of soda.

'I don't know what's come to your aunt, Miss Naomi,' the aggrieved Sally remarked despondently. 'It's as much as I can wash out a pair of white stockings for Sunday afternoon without her going on about my vanity and extravagance, and throwing Jezebel in my teeth, as if I was the wickedest young woman in Combhollow.'

These infinitesimal savings, though they inflicted some annoyance on the household, could go about as far towards counterbalancing the loss of five thousand pounds as the laborious exertions of an industrious beaver in the construction of a dam designed to stem the waters of Niagara; yet these vain efforts afforded some mental solace to aunt Judith's perturbed mind. She scraped the butter off her bread, and felt herself a domestic martyr.

'There'll be fine flaunting when she's a married woman and her own mistress,' thought Judith, ' with two hundred and fifty pounds a year for her own spending-silk gowns trimmed with thread-lace on workadays, I daresay. We sha'n't see her often at chapel, I should think. She'll be going to church for the sake of sitting in a big pew among the gentry. If I were Joshua I'd as leave have my daughter dead and buried as married to a fine gentleman that would look down upon me.'

Judith had never been able to get rid of the idea that in his secret soul Oswald Pentreath despised the Haggards and their surroundings. Her narrow mind could not conceive it possible that the son of a landowner could believe in his equality with shopkeepers; that the odour of soap and candles was not hateful to the nostrils of a gentleman who sealed his letters with a coat of arms that looked almost royal, and bore a name which was engraved on the oldest brazen tablet in the chancel. She was unable to understand that easy-going temper of Oswald's, to which rank and wealth were of

small moment compared with the blessings of personal well-being and the gratification of one's own inclination. She had a lurking conviction that Mr. Pentreath, be he never so polite and respectful, was secretly laughing at her; that he did not admire her Sunday gown, and thought her pronunciation vulgar; and that he encouraged that impudent jackanapes Jim in the practice of grimacing behind her shoulder as she poured out the tea or carved the cold joint at supper. This conviction and a general sense of injury, chiefly referable to that marriage portion of five thousand pounds, made aunt Judith unpleasant company to herself at this time, and not the most agreeable company for other people.

The young people were happy after their tranquil fashion, untouched by the blighting influence of this aggrieved spinster. They had their afternoon rambles together, and Naomi made progress in the art of pencil landscape, sitting for many a happy hour copying the bold curved lines of the hartstongue and the delicate tracery of parsley and oakleaf fern, or the larger outlines of elm or beech; while Oswald lay on the grass at her side reading Marmion or Ivanhoe. Gentle, peaceful time—a cup filled to the brim with perfect joy—to be remembered in days to come, when the memory shall be life's crowning sorrow.

The lovers had been employed thus one afternoon in August. Oswald had just read that intense and dramatic scene of Sir Walter Scott's most romantic poem when Constance de Beverley defies her pitiless judges. There had been an ominous stillness in the air for the last half-hour, and the birds were uttering those subdued twitterings by which they seem to warn one another of approaching evil; but Naomi had been too much absorbed by the story to give any heed to these whisperings of a coming storm, when one big drop falling on her pencilled group of ferns startled her out of her complacency. Oswald had been reading the stirring lines somewhat sleepily, the heavy air under those tall elms exercising a narcotic effect upon his senses, and he too had been heedless of a change in the heavens.

'Why, I declare it's raining!' he exclaimed, when one of those big drops had alighted upon his nose; 'and what a black sky! I'm afraid we're in for a storm. And you in that thin dress, Naomi! Let us get to the house as fast as we can.'

'To the Grange?' cried Naomi, with a look of alarm, as if he had proposed the most awful thing in the world.

Why not, love? It is to be your home next spring. Is it too much to ask a little shelter from the old roof to-day?'

'The Squire might not like-' faltered Naomi.

'He would be delighted. He has not asked you and your father formally to visit him, for then, you see, you would be visitors, and it is against his principles to squander his substance upon entertaining people; but if you were to drop in upon him unawares he would be

enchanted. Come, dear; the rain-drops are falling faster—and there's the first thunder-clap.'

It pealed among the trees, sounding so close to them that it seemed a local thunder-clap intended for them in particular.

'What a threatening sound it has, Oswald!' said Naomi, as they hurried towards the little gate which opened from the wood into the path.

'Yes; one can fancy the first murderer hearing such a peal as he fied. It sounds like the voice of Nemesis, doesn't it? There's a blinding flash; run, Naomi!'

They were at the gate by this time, and only a broad stretch of turf lay between them and the house. The Squire's oxen kept the turf closely cropped, and Oswald and his companion were able to run quickly over the short crisp grass. Naomi arrived at the porch with her cambric dress only lightly sprinkled by the rain.

The hall-door stood open, and Oswald led her in. He tried the handle of his father's den; but that sanctuary was locked. The Squire was out, and had the key of his study in his pocket, no doubt, according to custom. Naomi stood in the grave old hall, looking about her wonderingly. It was the first time she had ever entered this house, in which she was to live and die. She felt as if it were a solemn moment in her life—a moment to be remembered as the beginning of an epoch. This house was henceforward to mean something more for her than a tradition or a feature in a familiar landscape: it was to embody her idea of home.

She looked round her doubtfully. The fine square hall; the brown-oak panelling, adorned with half a dozen family portraits browner and darker than the old oak; the wide shallow staircase with its solid balustrade; the pavement of white and black marble, had doubtless a certain dignity and beauty of their own. She felt that she was beneath a roof which had sheltered many generations; but there was a bleakness and barrenness in the scene that chilled her. A house built for the accommodation of a large family and numerous servants must needs have a cheerless and empty look when it falls into the occupancy of a miser's shrunken household.

'Let me show you the rooms that are to be all your own,' said Oswald, opening the door of a long drawing-room, an apartment so rarely used that it had assumed a ghost-like air, as of a chamber conscious of old family secrets, and made gloomy by the mysteries of the past. It was a narrow panelled room, painted white and salmon, and this very delicacy of tint, which would have made the apartment cheerful under favourable conditions, enhanced its chill phantasmal aspect in the gray light of this thunderous afternoon.

All the furniture was at least a century old. Naomi had never imagined such spindle-legged tables, such narrow high-backed chairs, such a general straightness and spareness of outline; the bareness

of all ornament, save the small oval mirrors and crystal candelabra, and the lack of colour, struck even her inexperienced eye, which had been accustomed only to the plainest furniture. The brocaded window-curtains, once sea-green, had faded to a neutral tint; the seats and backs of chairs and sofas were covered with holland. There were no books, no pictures.

Oswald watched his betrothed, expectant of some expression of admiration. He fancied she would be delighted with rooms so much larger and more aristocratic than those in which she had lived all

her life.

'It's a handsome room, isn't it?' he asked. 'Forty feet by eighteen.'

'It's very long,' said Naomi, rather stupidly her lover thought.

'Perhaps you'd like to see the dining-room?'

'Very much.'

Anything would be a relief after this ghastly saloon, with its

white cold walls and general emptiness.

They crossed the hall and entered the dining-room. Here brownness and gloom replaced the ghostly whiteness of the saloon. Here too the furniture was scanty; but there was more homeliness, a greater look of occupation, this being the room in which the Squire and his son lived from January to December. There were newspapers, books, and writing-materials on a table in the bay-window; there were whips and walking-sticks in the corners; the large oaken sideboard was adorned with a pair of solid old silver tankards, and surmounted by a portrait of the present Squire, painted in the bloom of youth, when waistcoats were worn long and 'Wilkes and Liberty' was still a party cry.

The lightning flashed across Naomi's face as she looked out at the large bay-window, surveying that neatly-kept garden in front of the house, which was separated by a close-cut holly hedge from the neglected domain beyond, the wide stretch of turf which had once been a lawn sacred from the feet of cattle, and on which the Squire's store oxen now browsed at their ease. He could see no good in land which produced nothing—grass that was mown at much cost of labour only to be thrown on the manure-heap.

The day had grown darker, and the thunder-peals seemed to shake the old chimney, down whose wide throat there came gusts of wind and rain. It was an awful chimney for the wind to howl in; and the Squire and his son, sitting silently by the hearth on a gloomy winter evening, had often felt as if evil spirits were howling wild threatenings at them from the house-top.

Naomi looked at the dark hearth with an affrighted glance, as if she had heard the family banshee shricking at her.

'What an awful noise!' she said.

'It's only the wind, love. And now I must show you the

family portraits, and my mother's sitting-room, which will be yours so soon. I think it is the most cheerful room in the house.'

Naomi was glad to think that she was going to see something cheerful. The gloom of the dining-room had been more depressing than the ghostly pallor of the drawing-room.

They went up the uncarpeted staircase to a gallery which occupied the whole length of the house, with a row of long narrow windows looking westward, and a deep oaken seat in each window. Here there were family portraits of the usual character; sea-pieces, battle-pieces, fruit-pieces, and a Dutch picture or two to give a touch of human interest to the collection. Here too there were some old delf jars, filled with dried rose-leaves—roses that had been gathered by fingers that were now clay, and which exhaled an odour of the past.

Oswald showed his betrothed the untenanted rooms, all neatly kept by the indefatigable housemaid. The room that had been his mother's was the prettiest Naomi had seen yet. The white walls, embellished with carved garlands of fruit and flowers; the old furniture, painted white; a narrow old-fashioned bookcase on each side of the fireplace; cabinets of shells and sea-weeds between the windows, local shells and local weeds, which the Squire's young wife had collected in her idle uneventful days.

Naomi went eagerly to look at the books. They were many of them strange to her even in name. Old poets-Spenser, Cowley, Waller, Dryden, Prior, Pope-in white vellum, with gilded letter-The Essayists, in neat duodecimo volumes, with faded calf bindings: Richardson's voluminous novels, in thin octavos, bound in brown. Naomi read the titles with keenest interest. world of books was an unknown region to her, save for such feeble glimmer as was afforded by the Pocket Magazine, a folio Milton, with awful mezzotint pictures of Sin and Death, Satan and his Council, which she used to look at shudderingly in her childhood, and those books of a theological or devotional character which formed the staple of the minister's small collection. Joshua had never been a great reader, save of his Bible and those good old Puritan divines whose teaching was after his own heart. His life had been too full and busy to admit of his acquiring the habits of a student. He read the Scriptures, or Baxter's Saints' Rest, or Law's Serious Call by the wavside.

'What dear little books!' exclaimed Naomi, admiring the neat rows of thin volumes, literature spread over a wide surface.

'They all belonged to my grandfather, and came to my mother at his death. She was very fond of them, the poets especially.'

'I did not know there were so many poets. I knew of Pope and Spenser, but all these other names are strange to me. Why have you never teld me about them?'

'They are dead, my dear; gone to the limbo of forgotten genius. Byron sent the whole crew to Hades. They have a kind of fossil life in old-fashioned libraries, like flies in amber. Their music was sweet to mawkishness, their loves and sufferings were as unreal as their periwigs; they were the poets of a patchbox and powder period.'

He took out a volume of Waller and read the 'Lines to Amoret,' that elegant excuse for being in love with two women at once:

'Amoret! as sweet and good
As the most delicious food,
Which, but tasted, does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.
Sacharissa's beauty's wine,
Which to madness doth incline:
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal can sustain.'

'Not a bad definition of the love that satisfies and the love that intoxicates, is it, Naomi?' asked Oswald, as he closed the book. 'These periwigged poets reduced love to a science. You are my Amoret, Naomi, and have given life and gladness to my heart.'

'I hope you may never meet your Sacharissa,' replied Naomi gravely, 'since it seems that poets can love two women at once.'

'My dearest, that was written in the days of Charles II., when poets were fops and courtiers, and it was incumbent on a court poet to have a new mistress as often as he had a new coat. It was a scenic age, unreal as a stage play; and yet there were true lovers and broken hearts while Charles Stuart was king; but you'll find no trace of them among his poets.'

'I'm afraid I'm not clever enough to like that kind of poetry.'

'But you like my mother's room, Naomi?'

'It is lovely.'

'I am so glad to hear you say that. It will be your own after next March.'

'I have been trying to think of this house as my home, Oswald; but I have such a strange feeling about it. I cannot imagine myself living here. I cannot make a picture of our new life. It all seems far away and shadowy, like my idea of the life to come, which neither my own faith nor my father's teaching could ever make real or visible to me. I must have a very weak imagination.'

'Perhaps you have too much common sense, Naomi. You will not give your fancies scope. You think of yourself as Naomi Haggard living in your father's house in Combhollow, and you can't realise the fact that next year you will be Naomi Pentreath, and sole mistress of these desolate old rooms. Your coming will alter everything, dear. Even my father looks forward to it with pleasant anticipations.'

- 'He is very good. If it were not foolish or even wicked to give heed to such fancies, I should think that this feeling of mine was a presentiment—that God does not intend me ever to live the happy life you speak of. It is such a settled feeling in my mind to-day; it comes between me and my happiness, just as those stormy clouds come between us and the day.'
  - 'Naomi!'
- 'O, it is because I love you so dearly, Oswald! I cannot believe that Heaven means me to be so perfectly happy all my life, to have no sorrows, no trials,—I who have been taught that our journey on earth is to lead us through thorny places,—your love given to me in all its fulness. It is too much to expect from Providence.'
- 'My dearest, you have been taught a gloomy creed. Do you suppose Providence has never favoured true lovers—never smiled on a happy union before our time? There are old men and women who loved each other fifty years ago just as faithfully as you and I love to-day, and who have climbed the hill of life and gone down into the valley hand-in-hand. Providence means us to be happy for the most part, I believe, Naomi. Earth's most miserable men are those who have made their own sorrows. That is my creed.'

The Squire's harsh croak was heard in the hall below at this moment, and made an end of the conversation. Oswald took Naomi down to greet her future father-in-law, who had ridden home from one of his outlying farms in the rain, and was changing his coat and boots with the assistance of the old butler.

He stopped in the operation to kiss Naomi.

'We were caught in the storm, father, while we were sketching in the wood,' said Oswald. 'I brought Naomi in for shelter. I've been showing her my mother's sitting-room.'

'Very proper. It will be hers when she's married. She'll keep her accounts there, and do her sewing; won't you, my dear? My shirts and cravats are in a wretched state. It'll be a blessing to have a clever young woman like you to look after them. What a dreadful storm! It will do no end of mischief to the corn where it isn't cut—an excuse for tenants being backward with their Christmas rent.'

'The rain has stopped, I think,' said Naomi timidly, looking out through the open door, 'and I must go home to tea.'

'Never mind your tea, my dear. Oswald shall get you a dish of tea before you go,' said the Squire, in a gush of hospitality.

But Naomi declared that her father would be alarmed at her absence; and the storm being really over, Oswald and she set out for Combhollow.

## CHAPTER XII.

## 'SHE IS FAST MY WIFE.'

September was nearly ended. Harvest homes were over, and in Combhollow there was a general impression that winter was a season in the immediate future, and that linsey and merino would be soon the only wear. Household fires began to have a cheery look in the dusk, and ruddy light flickered on the walls and ceilings of cosy parlours at tea-time,—in that dim hour when the busiest housewife might lay aside her daily task of making or mending, and fold her hands for a brief span, with a virtuous sense of having earned the luxury of repose, while she discussed the character or prospects of her neighbours, or talked of that last dreadful murder chronicled in the county papers, or the latest scandal about England's crownless queen.

Joshua had gone on another journey in this tranquil autumn weather. He had not told his family much about the object or design of this last excursion, but had contented himself with stating that it was a matter of business which called him away, and that he should be absent at most a week.

Judith was not a little offended at this reticence.

'I don't know what's come over your father that he's taken to gadding,' she said to Naomi. 'He's never been the same man since he went to open young Wild's chapel. One would think it had turned his head. And yet it was no great honour for him to be asked to do it—an out-of-the-way place like that, where the people are as ignorant as negro slaves, I daresay.'

'I can see no change in father,' replied Naomi. 'He is as good as he has always been, and as thoughtful for others. If there is any

change, it is that he seems kinder than ever.'

'Ah!' exclaimed Judith, with vexation; 'what's the use of talking to girls in love? It's throwing away good words. You've no eyes nor ears for any one but your lover. If you were in the business you'd see the change in your father fast enough. Half his time his wits are wool-gathering.'

'Perhaps he's thinking of his sermons, aunt.'

'He never used to think of 'em when he was behind his counter.'

Naomi had no further explanation to offer. It had indeed seemed to her of late that her father was kinder and more sympathetic than she had ever known him to be since the days of her childhood, when she had been his prattling companion in many a rustic walk. He had entered into her feelings about Oswald, he had talked to her of her future; and to Oswald himself he had been all kindness and indulgence. Never had her home been pleasanter to

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her, or her life happier, than during the last three months. Perhaps this is why she had found it so difficult to imagine herself transferred to any other home, the scene of her life shifted from the homely house in the High-street to the gloomy dignity of the Grange.

Joshua had been absent more than ten days, a breach of faith

upon which aunt Judith enlarged with some bitterness.

'A stranger in the pulpit, and our last butter-cask nearly empty. If that isn't a change in your father I don't know the meaning of the word. But some people can twist words any way; one 'ud need a new dictionary to understand 'em,' exclaimed the anxious housewife, as she and Naomi sat together at tea in the glow of an afternoon fire.

Jim had gone to Barnstaple to order goods. He was gradually emerging from the chrysalis of boyhood, and showing an aptitude for business which his aunt lauded as the crowning ornament of manhood. He was sharp and energetic, intensely matter of fact, and more eager for gain than his father cared to see him, but a good boy withal, soft-hearted and kindly.

' Perhaps father may be home to-night,' said Naomi soothingly.

'Ah, that's what you said last night, and the night before last. If he isn't home to-night or to-morrow there'll be no service on Sunday, for Mr. Scrupel only promised for the one Sabbath. And there'd be a pass for things to come to! How could your father hold his head up in Combhollow after that?'

'I am sure my father won't neglect his duty.'

'Won't he? How about our next cask of butter? Where's that to come from, I should like to know, before we've been out of Irish ever so long? It was more than I would take upon myself to write to Ireland for it.'

'You might have ordered another cask, aunt.'

'I wouldn't be so venturesome. A deal of thanks I should get for my pains if the butter turned out rancid. No, Naomi; if your father neglects his business he must bear the brunt of his own conduct; and if there's no service on the Sabbath—'

'There will be service,' cried Naomi, starting from her chair at the sound of a vehicle drawing up in front of the gate. 'That's father!'

'Why, there's no coach to bring him at this time, child. The Barnstaple mail won't be in for a good hour. Why, bless us and save us, if it isn't a post-shay, with a trunk on the roof too!' exclaimed aunt Judith, looking out of the window. 'Your father took nothing with him but a bag, and unless he was gone clean out of his mind he wouldn't come home in a shay.'

'He may be ill,' cried Naomi, alarmed; for this apparition of a post-chaise was one of those startling appearances which must mean something out of the common—possibly evil.

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'It must'be a mistake,' said aunt Judith, following Naomi into the passage. 'No, there's Joshua getting out, and no more the matter with him than there is with me,' she added, in a tone of disgust.

Yes, there was Joshua confronting them in the twilight, with a curious look on his dark face, a kind of shy triumph, as of one half ashamed of a great happiness. He drew Naomi to him, and kissed her with more warmth of feeling than he had ever shown after so short a severance.

' How is my dear daughter?' he asked gently.

'Very well, father, and very glad to have you back again.'

'We're all but out of Irish butter,' said Judith accusingly from the obscurity of the passage.

'Ah, Judith, is that you? Never mind the butter. We'll soon set things right,' replied the minister, going back to the chaise.

'You won't get another cask till the end of next week, with all your cleverness. I thought you'd broken a leg at the least, or you'd never have come home in a shay,' added Judith.

'I came in a chaise because I had some one to bring with me,

my dear,' replied Joshua calmly.

He handed out a girl—a slim girlish figure, a lily face under a gipsy bonnet tied with a broad white ribbon. Naomi saw tender blue eyes looking up at her beseechingly in the twilight, and rosebud lips that were faintly tremulous. She had never before beheld such flower-like beauty, loveliness so delicate in form or colouring.

Joshua put the stranger's hand under his arm and led her into the house, and into the firelit parlour; Judith falling back against the passage wall as they went by, as if she had made way for a spectre; Naomi following her father full of wonder.

'I have brought you a companion and friend, Naomi,' said Joshua, when they were all in the parlour, aunt Judith having followed automatically like Hamlet after the ghost. 'I have brought you some one whom you must love and cherish for my sake.'

'If you've brought this young woman to help in the business, you may give her the drapery department altogether. I wash my hands of it from this moment!' exclaimed Judith, awful in her indignation.

'I have brought her to occupy the first place in my household, as she holds the first place in my heart,' answered Joshua. 'This

is Cynthia Haggard, my wife.'

Sister and daughter stared at the minister with wonder-stricken countenances, pallid with horror. This calm announcement of his went so far beyond their ideas of the possible—this fact of a second marriage was an event so wide of their wildest dreams—that both aunt and niece were dumb. To both it seemed that Joshua must

have gone out of his mind; that he must be talking distractedly under the spell of demoniac possession, rather than that this thing could be true—this slender flower-like girl the grave preacher's second wife.

Joshua Haggard looked at the two women, surprised at the constantion his words had caused. Having once made up his own mind that Cynthia was his fittest helpmate, created for him by his God, as Eve for Adam, it had not occurred to him that other people could have any occasion to wonder at his choice. Her youth, her beauty, were blessings which Heaven had bestowed upon him with the free gift of her love. She loved him, she had chosen him; gladly, willingly she had nestled in his arms, and yielded him a love which was almost worship. She had spanned the gulf of years that yawned between them; she had flown to him as a bird to its nest. By her free choice she had justified his boldness in loving her. Had any one else the right to count his years, or see unfitness in this union of youth and maturity, if she had not done so?

He was angry at his daughter's blank look of surprise. From Judith he had expected rebellion, and he took no heed of her mute horror.

'You do not give my wife a very warm welcome, Naomi,' he said, with suppressed indignation. 'I had expected more from your sense of duty, if not from your affection.'

'Forgive me, father,' said Naomi, with a look of unspeakable pain. Those deliberate words of Joshua's had shown her that this thing was very real. 'I was so surprised, I could not speak.' And then, going up to Cynthia, she put out her hand and said gently, 'I am very glad to see you.'

Cynthia took the proffered hand, which was cold as ice, bent

her graceful head, and kissed the cold fingers tearfully.

'I am sorry you should have been so surprised,' she said. 'I asked Mr. Haggard to tell you before we were married, but he thought it was better not.'

'I fancied my marriage would have been a pleasant surprise for my daughter. I thought she might be glad to know that when she

leaves me I shall still have some one to care for me-

Aunt Judith's overcharged breast relieved itself by a groan.

'Some one young and bright and pleasant for my companion.'
Judith groaned rather louder than before.

'For the rest, I had no one's leave or license to ask for my marriage. And now, Judith, perhaps you'll be good enough to get us some tea, while I go out and settle with the postboy. We've had a long drive from Barnstaple. Naomi, you can show Cynthia the way up-stairs, and help her to take off her cloak and bonnet. My

room is ready, I suppose?'

'It's ready for you,' replied Judith; 'I don't know whether it's

good enough for Mrs. Haggard'—throwing a spiteful intensity into the mere utterance of the name which showed great power of expression. 'She may be used to something better; though I might have known what was going to happen when you ordered new chintz for the bedstead and windows.'

'What is good enough for me will be good enough for my wife,' said Joshua, looking fondly after his bride as she left the room with Naomi. 'And now bestir yourself, Judith, like a kind soul, and give us a comfortable tea—a dish of ham and eggs, or something substantial. Cynthia ate hardly any dinner.'

'Cynthia!' ejaculated Judith, as if suddenly awakened from a state of semi-consciousness; 'why, that's the name of the young

woman you found on the common.'

'It is.'

'And you've married that young woman—a tramp, a servant-girl!'

'I have married a lovely and innocent girl, whom Providence designed to be the blessing of my later years,' replied Joshua. 'God gave her to me for my own that day on the common. She has loved me from that day, and I am not sure that my love for her was not born in me then. My thoughts have followed her and cared for her all the time, though I only knew last midsummer how dear she had become to me. You look at me as if I was talking a strange tongue, Judith.'

'It might as well be Hebrew for my understanding of it,' answered Judith. 'However, you've made your bed and you can lie upon it. You don't want my leave or license, as you say; no man wants leave or license to play the fool. That's an act of free will with most folks.'

'Come, Judith,' cried the minister sternly, 'if you think that I am going to submit to insolence or insult in a matter that touches me so nearly as this you are mistaken. A man's worst foes are those of his own household. I will have no enemy to share my daily bread and my daily prayer. If you and I are to live together, you must love my wife as you love me. She is a part of me—the brighter, better part. An insult to her is twice an insult to me, and I shall resent it twice as keenly. And now, Judith, shake hands upon this, and take it into your heart; or else find some other shelter than this roof before you lie down to-night. No one shall live in my house that is an enemy to my wife.'

'That's short notice,' said Judith grimly. 'Well, there's my hand. You've been a good brother to me, and I've not been a bad sister to you. We won't quarrel about a—pretty face. May you be happy!'

They shook hands—heartily upon Joshua's side, with a shade of reservation on Judith's. The minister felt that he had conquered;

but these household victories sometimes leave behind them the seed of future warfare.

Judith bustled out to prepare a meal for the travellers; and soon there was a cheerful hissing sound—an odour of fried ham from the kitchen, where Judith stood over the frying-pan with a moody brow, while Sally obeyed her orders in fear and wonder.

'Get out the best tea-things and the plated candlesticks, and get a pair of wax-candles from the shop,' said Judith; at which command Sally stood open-mouthed and speechless. There had been no such preparations since the last tea-party.

'Your master has got married, Sally. We must show him how

pleased we are.'

'Married!' cried Sally. 'Is it Mrs. Trimly?'

Mrs. Trimly was a corpulent widow, with a very respectable fortune that had been made in a tan-pit. She occupied a large redbrick house—her own—at the upper end of Penmoyle; she wore silk gowns every afternoon, gold spectacles, and the smartest caps in the town, and was a devoted disciple of Joshua's, wheezing through the service every Sunday morning, and sometimes guilty of nasal breathings of an unmistakable character on a Sunday afternoon.

To Sally it seemed the most natural thing in the world that Joshua should espouse the tanner's widow, although she was fifteen years his senior, and a sufferer from high feeding and chronic asthma. Sally had made up her mind ever so long ago, on the occasion of a state tea-drinking, that Mrs. Trimly looked with peculiar favour on the minister, and that the comfortably-furnished brick house, with its twenty acres of orchard and meadow, as well as a fortune in the Funds, might be Joshua's for the asking.

'No,' said Judith; 'it isn't Mrs. Trimly. That would have been a sensible marriage, if you like. But when men of my brother's age marry they don't think of pleasing sensible people. They marry to please their eye, Sally. Your new mistress has got flaxen hair and blue eyes, Sally. That's enough for my brother. I hope you'll like her, and that you'll take the same pains with polishing the

furniture that you have taken in my time.'

'You are not going away, are you, mum?' gasped 'Sally, with a vision of a paradisiacal life opening before her almost too dazzling for the mental eye.

'No, Sally, I am not going away; but I'm going to be a cipher,'

replied Judith severely.

Sarah's spirits sank. She did not know the meaning of that substantive cipher, though she had a distant acquaintance with the same word as a verb. But she felt that so long as Miss Judith remained upon the scene her toil would know no relaxation.

Meanwhile the two girls—wife and daughter—were up-stairs in Joshua's bedroom, stealing shy glances at each other by the dim

light of a candle which Naomi held while Cynthia stood before the dressing-table taking off her bonnet.

There were tears in the young wife's eyes, and a sad look about the sweet rosy mouth, as she smoothed her bright hair with Joshua's hard black brush, looking in the glass at a misty reflection of that half-sorrowful, half-frightened face. Inexperienced as she was in the varieties of humanity, instinct was keen enough to teach her that her husband's marriage was distasteful to his kindred, that there was no loving welcome for her in this strange home.

She looked at Naomi with unspeakable awe. Was this the affectionate daughter, the tender companion and friend Joshua had promised her? That tall erect figure, that nobly-chiselled face, with its crown of raven hair bound in a thick coil round a high comb on the summit of the head, inspired admiration, but held love at a distance. Cynthia felt that she could never be familiar with this handsome stepdaughter; and yet the face was like Joshua's, and for that reason must needs seem dear to her.

'I am so sorry your father did not tell you sooner,' she began falteringly. 'I'm afraid his marrying me has made you unhappy—'

'It has surprised me very much,' Naomi answered gravely. 'I have never thought of my father marrying—the idea never came into my head. If any one had suggested it, I should have been angry. And you are so young—so much fitter to be his daughter than his wife.'

'No wife could love and honour him more than I do,' said Cynthia, the tears streaming down her cheeks.

'No one could know him and not honour him,' replied the daughter proudly. 'Don't cry; I am not blaming you. I have no right to blame him. I don't want to speak unkindly to you, still less to speak undutifully of my father; but his marriage is a great surprise.'

Here Naomi broke down, and the two young women performed a sobbing duet. Naomi was the first to recover.

'I am very wicked,' she said remorsefully. 'As if my dear father had not the right to be happy in his own way. I am jealous, unreasonable, abominable. Poor little thing'—drawing Cynthia to her with protecting tenderness—'don't cry. I am not so cruel or so ungrateful as I must have seemed just now. But I love my father so dearly, and I thought I should have him always all my own; and the idea that he could love any one else more than me was too bitter, just at first. I was selfish, cruel, undutiful. Dry your tears, dear; we must be fond of each other for my father's sake.'

Cynthia's sobs ceased. She clung lovingly to the tall figure, hanging on it like ivy on an oak.

O, if you will love me a little I shall be so happy,' said the

girl-wife. 'He ought to have told you. I know I must seem an intruder. But if you could know how I love him; how from the first—when he took me under his care, a poor runaway creature, without a friend, used to hard usage and hard words—from the first I worshipped him! He was so true, so strong, a rock of defence. I feared no one when he had taken me under his care.'

'Yes, he told me how he found you,' said Naomi thoughtfully. 'Poor child!'

This was the waif of whom her father had spoken—the girl in whose story she had felt a tender pitying interest, never dreaming that this nameless wanderer was to rob her of her father's heart.

'Did he tell you that I was a heathen then,' asked Cynthia solemnly, 'knowing nothing, believing nothing, without one hope beyond my daily life—and that was altogether hopeless? I had known no father on earth, I knew of no Father in heaven. I thought death was the end of all things, and I sometimes longed to die.'

' Poor child!' repeated Naomi, with grave pity.

'Poor then,' said Cynthia, 'the poorest of the poor. But from that blessed day rich beyond measure. "Henceforward there is laid up for me a crown of glory."

There was no touch of sanctimoniousness or cant in her utterance of these words, only a childlike and implicit faith.

'Yes,' answered Naomi, with deepest gravity, 'if you win the race.'

Her more serious nature was not so easily assured. These triumphant party cries and watchwords of evangelism sometimes awakened doubts and anxieties in her reflective mind. For St. Paul such a glad burst of triumph was but the natural expression of a victorious soul; but for these followers of St. Paul, who had endured nothing, accomplished nothing—who had fought no battle, won no victory—from them this bold assurance of felicity seemed arrogant to the verge of blasphemy.

'And you will try to love me a little?' said Cynthia pleadingly.

'I shall love you very much, for my father's sake, if you make his life happy.'

'I shall honour and obey him, and wait upon him like his servant if he will let me,' answered Cynthia. 'And may I call you Naomi?'

'Yes, Cynthia.'

And from that moment they spoke to each other as Cynthia and Naomi. There was no question of the word mother; but in Naomi's manner to her stepdaughter there was from the first a touch of motherliness, a protecting kindness, which was in a manner the reversal of their positions.



The wife's weaker nature, clinging, dependent, childlike in its exquisite womanliness, leaned on the firmer and more masculine character of the daughter.

'I thought you were never coming,' said Joshua, when they went down to the parlour, where the tea-table had assumed a positively splendid appearance, lighted by wax-candles, such as were supplied at three-and-sixpence a pound to Mr. Haggard's most aristocratic customers.

Judith sat bolt upright, with her hands folded, watching the candles burning, as a larger soul might have watched the blazing pyre which consumed the fortunes of an imperial house. There was a depth of desolation in this sacrifice of the wax-candles, a bitter irony in the setting up of these waxen tapers to do honour to that wandering beggar-girl whom Joshua had chosen for his wife.

'What have you two girls been talking about all this time?' asked Joshua, with an attempt at cheeriness; 'making friends, I

hope ?'

'Yes, father,' Naomi answered, with a look that was full of duty and affection; 'we have made friends. Cynthia and I are going to be sisters. It would sound foolish for me to call her mother, for she is two years younger than I am, and looks younger than she is.'

'Very well, my dear. You shall be sisters, then. I care not what name you give the bond, so that you love each other. And now, Judith, the tea.'

Miss Haggard had placed herself at a corner of the table remote from her accustomed seat in front of the tea-tray. There she sat rigid, impenetrable. She did not frown; no sour expression of visage betrayed her discontent. She had composed her features to a sublime self-abnegation—a resignation of all active share in the life passing around her. She looked what she had called herself in her late discourse with Sally—a cipher.

'O, dear no,' she exclaimed; 'I couldn't think of such a thing. I have done with the teapot. Mrs. Haggard will pour out the tea

of course; it's her place.

'O, please don't make any difference on my account,' cried Cynthia, with a timidly beseeching glance at that stony countenance. 'I have never been accustomed to pour out the tea. I should feel quite awkward, unless Joshua wished it,' with a little look at her husband, which plainly said, His lightest wish is my law.

'I desire nothing that can cause discomfort or ill-will in this household,' answered Joshua. 'All I wish is that we may live happily together, in perfect peace and union. Pour out the tea,

Judith, and let there be no senseless fuss about trifles.'

'I'm not one to make a fuss about nothing,' replied Judith, with

dignity. 'But it's just as well to put things on a proper footing at once. It saves misunderstanding afterwards.'

And with this protest she assumed her accustomed position, which she never afterwards offered to resign.

Cynthia took the chair nearest her husband, nestling to his side, and looking up at him with bright glances of admiration and regard as he talked about home affairs with his daughter.

Jim came home by and by, full of importance, and was presented to his father's wife. The surprise was startling for him as well as for the rest, but he received the blow much more coolly than his aunt and sister. His brain, sharpened by a course of wholesale and retail grocery, took in the material aspects of this change in his family circumstances, rather than that spiritual side of things which had troubled Naomi. He did not think regretfully of his father's second marriage as a foolish and undignified act in a grave career; but he began to wonder what effect this union might exercise upon his own prospects.

'As long as father gives me the business, I'm content,' he told himself. 'And my stepmother looks a pretty foolish thing, that wouldn't be likely to make one's life unpleasant. I hope she'll take the reins out of aunt Judith's hands, and let us have puddens every day.'

It was not till after prayers that Naomi left off expecting Oswald, who rarely let an evening pass without coming in, were it but for half an hour. But on this particular evening the Squire had taken it into his head to be prosy, and kept his son at home, talking politics by the wood fire in the dining-room, while the autumn wind sighed and moaned in the wide old chimney.

'I wonder what Oswald will think of father's marriage?' was Naomi's chief thought that evening.

## ART EDUCATION

THE good old English theory of education made it equivalent to the good old English dose of medicine. In a word, it was nothing if not nasty. The writer remembers, not without a pang of bitterness, how he was packed off at a very tender age to the custody of an inhuman brute, who had vivisected and bruised one boy to death, and, moreover, had all but performed the same quieting office for his own father. Yet, because he was considered a successful teacher and an eminent disciplinarian, it was deemed expedient to delegate parental authority, minus parental humanity, to one who descended to an unhonoured grave, loathed by the hundreds he had tunded. Strangely enough, no one was sufficiently rational to take into account the quantity and quality of mind possessed by children handed over to Indeed, the popular belief at the cruel mercies of this creature. that period would seem to have been, that all boys have brains precisely similar, and that the one way to cultivate or expand the cerebral portion of the juvenile body is by an unremitting exercitation of corporeal regions intended by nature as a covering for the bones when the human frame happens to occupy a sitting posture. might have supposed that the pedagogues of that day held the theory attributed to Lord Monboddo, and that they were afraid lest, if the puerile tergum were not constantly flailed, the preadamite tail might surreptitiously assert itself. Yet at least one other reason might be discovered to account for their ferocity. 'Don't you find,' inquired a non-flagellant master of his ultra-flagellant brother, 'that corporeal punishment has an exasperating effect on the patient?' no,' was the candid reply; 'on the principle of counter-irritation, it is found in practice to be quite soothing to the temper. Only you must be careful to draw the blood thoroughly downwards. the brain cools, and the most irascible subject becomes perfectly amenable to authority.'

In strict accordance with the notion that all boys are equal, having the same capacities and capabilities, was the matter dished up for the pupil to digest. Just as convicts are apportioned food so tough and filthy that they cannot eat it, with the humane and benevolent design of elevating their moral natures, so the one sine quâ non for a school-book was that it should be wholly and totally unintelligible. It was considered a fine mental exercise for the delicate brain of youth to grasp at the cane's point a mass of what sounded worse than gibberish. The text of the Latin grammar was writ in

the doggiest of dog-Latin, and this detestable balderdash children fresh from the nursery were compelled with extreme rigour to commit to memory. On such a system satire is wasted. There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous; and there will be found as much irrationality in the stolid respectable lout as in the nervous excitable idealist who by a chance lesion finds his way to Colney Hatch. The mind of the one is scarcely less perverted by mania than that of the other by sheer torpidity. It is the old Aristotelian philosophy of excess and defect repeated; only somehow the world, which puts excess very cautiously under lock and key, has treated defect hitherto with marvellous leniency. Your unimaginative, unpictorial, unmusical, unsympathetic, purblind animals, by a complimentary misnomer termed gentlemen, rise to be schoolmasters, bishops, secretaries of state. They ride in Carlylese gigs, and are honoured in their generations and the glory of their times. They are good boys and good men. One might add also with truth that they are oftentimes cunning, hard, and cruel boys, and cunninger, harder, and crueller men. At all events, they take care of number one, and number one, being universally respected, gets to rule the roast. In this cycle of omnipresent competition, when the scum so frequently rises to the top—a truth, by the bye, revoltingly patent to the natives of British India-not only your average, but even your stolid, man wins the race against genius. It is the fable of the hare and the tortoise illustrated, no doubt. We pause, however, to inquire what object there can be in crushing the really great, and, worse still, in exalting mere mediocrity. So do they not in Germany. And Germany is the land of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Spohr, Beethoven; sy, and the land also of Bismarck, Von Moltke, and Von Roon. No one wants to Prussianise our institutions; yet might we, with propriety and profit, learn of our cousins in the Fatherland to honour art, to value originality, to cherish, as the chiefest and rarest jewel to be found on earth, genius.

It must be remembered that the technic—the grammar of art—can only be acquired in childhood. Fail to learn it then, and the opportunity is for ever lost. The most creative genius ever given by God to humanity is thereby wasted, nullified. At the present moment, we are imparting to our sons an education which, if it does not develop, does not absolutely eliminate the poetic faculty. Under a somewhat similar régime Byron sang, though at Cambridge; Shelley, though at Oxford. Indeed, to be strictly just, the training at Eton may have tended to cultivate somewhat a poetic taste; and the same might have held with regard to Radley, had she but adhered to Dr. Sewell's original ideas. This, however, par parenthèse; our argument is that, poetry alone excepted, every department of art is neglected in the education of a gentleman. Your son may have in him the making of a painter, a musician, a sculptor; yet the gift he

has is simply stamped out as it were a rinderpest, in order that he may become an indifferent scholar or a twentieth-rate mathematician.

But, it will be argued, music at all events holds a place in our There exist choral societies et id genus omne almost This is true. Yet one swallow makes not a summer. everywhere. nor one drop a draught of wine. Art in this country is voted a parergon, not a serious business. We are not yet sufficiently civilised to honour artists or to appreciate art. All our honour and appreciation is reserved for financial enterprise—if successful, of course. A man who bade Sir Thomas Tallowfat, alderman, or Mr. Contango of the Stock Exchange, or even Lord Asnapper, peer of the realm, to take the Latin, Greek, and sum-books of Tallowfat, Contango, or Asnapper the younger, and chuck them into the nearest gutterthey would assimilate with the mud, no doubt-would be considered If again, after the operation of guttering the useless books had been—to adopt the inimitable Carlylese—accurately well performed, this same lunatic were to order old Tallowfat and Contango to abandon the romance they had been building of one day seeing their respective hopefuls squatted in their grease and share shops on the high stool, and old Asnapper to forego the idea of the pocket borough for his son; moreover that each and all should instead surrender their pet progeny to the hard labour of practising the violin for eight hours per diem,—we are of opinion that the alderman, the broker, and the nobleman would coincide in the notion that the afore-mentioned lunatic was gone ramping, raging, roaring mad. And yet a certain opulent banker of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, whose wealth exceeded that of many an English peer, and whose position socially could not well be inferior to that of the Tallowfat alderman, did of his own free will surrender his glorious son Felix to the study—av, let us be accurate, the exclusive study—of the much-despised and down-trodden art of music; none making him ashamed; none even suggesting that he was idiot, still less lunatic, still less in urgent need of a strait-waistcoat. We do not even read that the German money-changer regarded this really rational and God-loving act of his in the light of a sacrifice. For this simple reason—in Germany art is honoured. The good father was giving his best not to disgrace and social extinction, not to impudent patronage and genteel poverty. What humanity would have lost had English snobbishness ruled in Frankfort can hardly be estimated at present. In the humble judgment of the present writer, the world could better afford that Shakespeare should never have been, than that the poetry of that German banker's son should be It is not only great, not only erased from our circle of knowledge. beautiful, but emphatically so divine that it becomes difficult to conceive that its wondrous creator shared the deformed humanity of a Tallowfat, a Contango, an Asnapper. In England we have taken adequate precautions lest perchance a Mendelssohn should arise in our midst. The refined classes know less about music than about dove-murder and cock-fighting. No one dreams of yielding up a child, in the teeth of our insensate vulgar prejudice, to art-most would prefer Moloch at once-whilst when a positive genius, as, for example, Sterndale Bennett, does emerge from the dead level of general nothingness, we have invented a clever trick for quashing his creative ability. In a word, we set him to work to teach bread-andbutter misses scales. This rotatory calabash leaves him neither time. brains, hope, nor genius for original thought. Just as we convert all our best painters and sculptors into mere delineators of foolish but coiny faces, and thereby successfully poleaxe their brilliancy, so if s young man comes over from Leipsic with an F minor concerto we tell him off to a dozen ladies' schools, like an Irish private to the 'biled' cabbage at a mess dinner; and there ends his career as a poet. We do not require Mendelssohns or Raphaels. Hurdy-gurdy turners and photographers are more in our line. Give us a brazen tune, a speaking portrait.

The above sentiments will be denounced as a base and unpatriotic exaggeration. Esto. The writer's back is broad, and he is, moreover, conscious of being the witness of truth. In justification of

the above antecedents let us be more precise.

With the deepest reverence-indeed, not without an apology lest the reverse should be imagined, even for an instant—we will venture to quote divine words apposite to our present subject. They stand thus: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' In their plain natural sense we may fairly interpret them to mean, that in all mundane matters life has its ergon and its parergon; its treasure, or the object round which all else centres; its délassements; its extra labours, pleasures, cares. Now our contention is, that in education no pains is taken to discover a child's treasure, implanted in him by the Creator. On the contrary, he is set to work on that which never can profit him, because he never can make it his ownthis in ninety-nine instances out of every hundred. He is warned at the outset that he must, by some mental process not defined or even hinted at, manufacture the ergon of his life in accordance with his teacher's preconceived ideas of what is fitting. Thus the poet is told off to the treadmill of sums; the musician to the dismal horror of Greek verbs; whilst, in case genius should chance to protrude its unwelcome features at odd moments, the very play-hours are regulated by rule of thumb, and the boy who would wish to sing is driven off like a serf to fag at cricket or football. All this error -for error it undoubtedly is-arises from the supposition that, though God has dispersed about the world more than two talents, two studies only are worthy of cultivation, viz. language and sums, for the very conclusive reasons that the heavily-paid teachers happen

to be ignorant of all other subjects, and that these two alone lead to preëminence in the two universities of the realm.

Art, we assert—and so far perhaps our faith concides with that of the pedagogues—will not bear a divided rule. She must be the ergon, the real business of real life. If, as the world will comprehend some day, it is a great, a good, and a holy thing to be a Joachim, and interpret with consummate skill the vast thoughts of mighty minds, then it follows that the devotion of a lifetime to the violin—pace Mr. Carlyle, who exhibits an hereditary, dull, John-Knoxian prejudice as regards art—is not a waste, a folly, an ignominy, but in the highest degree ennobling and exalting; a career worthy the highest ambition of the highest monarch or noble; a career which offers itself to those few who both own the gift of God and possess the stern resolution to magnify that gift.

We have purposely selected the violin as our example, both because the word 'fiddler' to the Scotch mind, which cannot rise beyond the notion of a jig or a reel, has got to be a term of contempt, and because we wish to state our case in a form which, to the dullard, may appear as a reductio ad absurdum against us. Mr. Carlyle's brain is so infected with congenital Puritanism, that he can find in his original vocabulary no term of reproach so scathing as this word 'fiddler.' The idea he would convey to an open-meuthed grinning auditory is, that the study of the noblest of instruments—that which forms the basis of all tone-poetry—is tantamount to the deepest degradation. He could apply no harder epithet to his drunken, dirty, half-nude fellow-countrymen, whose omnipresence renders Glasgow loathsome to civilised beings.

It would not have suited our purpose thus to call attention to the weak point in the armour of a strong man, were it not that we believe that Mr. Carlyle's views are but an exaggeration of those held by less puritanical people south of the Tweed. We are a practical nation. With us nothing is good which does not imply success. At present tradesmen sand the sugar, chalk the milk, salt the beer, and otherwise do their duty in that state of life wherein they find themselves, in order to send a son to Oxford or Cambridge and buy him a good fat living. Disestablish the Church to-morrow, and do you suppose that your sandy, chalky, salty retailer would relish the notion of a son of his turning parson? Heaven forfend! Solvuntur tabulæ risu. Under such altered circumstances ordination would at once be stigmatised as sheer washy sentiment. It would not pay!

This brings us to our point. Until the better days arise, when education, more widely diffused, shall demand for Art the reverence which is her due; until that millennial period when men shall esteem creative genius as worthy of a salary as are the respectable parties who nowadays read a lithographed composition of an attorney's clerk

(price one shilling, plus postage) hebdomadally from the altitude of a pulpit, at the not immoderate charge of from 10l. to 20l. per performance, a residence thrown in,—until some such period, it is quite evident that those boys who have in after-life to make their way in the world must perforce put their genius in their pocket and stick to their grammars and sums. Genius will not secure you an arch-deaconry, a clerkship in the Sticking-Plaster Office, a writership with the reversion of Terai-fever, or even an ugly wife with a colossal endowment. On the contrary, genius may land you in the vilest of London slums, and provide you with a superabundance of dirt, indigence, starvation, misery, and insolence from inferiors; so that the coldly calculating parent will perhaps, in the present condition of these latitudes, do well to crush the ideal in his son. Blind the eyes, deafen the ears, stave-in the bump of imagination, and there remains—a practical Englishman.

We have avowed our conviction that the patient abiding of meek art shall not perish for ever. On the contrary, it may be that in the proximate future the art-creator, the art-teacher, and the art-student will hold as honourable positions in society as bishops, curates, and undergraduates. That all the income devoted to higher education should be lavished on dead languages, mathematics, and natural science, is just too preposterous. In the interim, however, whilst the clouds of prejudice are slowly—very slowly—vanishing, it may be worth while to inquire whether it is necessary to sacrifice a certain portion of good material, which happens to be independent, to the fanaticism of Mrs. Grundy.

We apprehend not. There are thousands of wealthy personages who cannot find a line for their sons, for the simple reason that they go the wrong way to work. Your young English Mendelssohn is sent to a preparatory school; then to Eton or Harrow; thence probably to Oxford, which he quits after a brief residence and a possible difference with his dons. He has then before him, it may be, the House of Commons, the Diplomatic Service, the Guards or a crack regiment, or the vacuity of the clubs. His prospects to the outer world appear golden, yet his life is not satisfying, inasmuch as it lacks purpose. In a word, the man is possessed of the artist's soul, but it has been fatally dwarfed. He has been shoved into a variety of grooves, yet none have fitted him. At five-andtwenty he is blasé. If he owns to enthusiasm, it is in regard of some such mere animalism as yachting, hunting, or shooting. His higher and beautiful nature has been cauterised, burnt out of him, by years It may be, it is true, that his special gift received a little, thin, watery encouragement. His art-instincts were titillated by lessons from a languid master, say twice a week. In the end he knows enough of the subject which should have been his own to be fully conscious of its value and his own inability. To revert to our

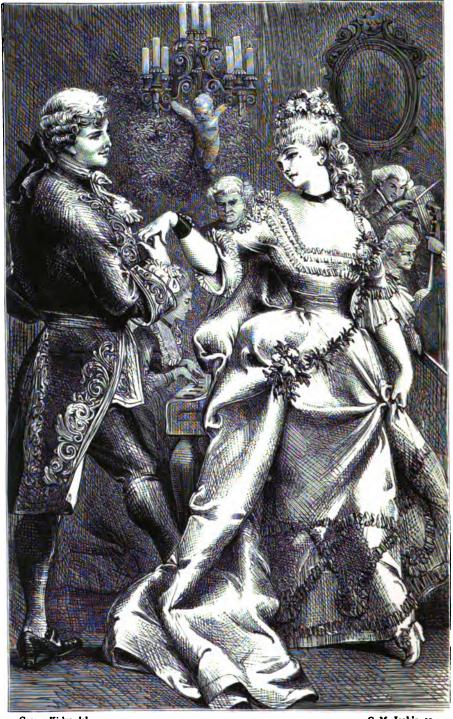
previous terminology, that which should have been the ergon has been made the parergon of his life, and it is wasted, lost, ruined.

Now there can surely be found no just cause why Crossus the omnipotent should bow the knee to that female Baal, Grundy. Crossus has at heart the temporal and spiritual welfare of his offspring Crossiculus. Why, in the name of common sense, if he finds that the boy has both an eye and a genuine love for form and colour, should be condemn the poor child to sums? The fact of his having been thirty years ago at Cambridge, where he adorned the 'Poll' and hated algebra almost as sincerely as Euclid, cannot prove the advisability of removing his son from a study, which will make of him a worker and expand all that is best in his composition, in order to run him in that mill the end whereof is the Cambridge Senate House. If it were not for the power of petty pride and paltry prejudice, there could be no two opinions on the subject. Little Crossiculus has but one life to live. He is a tender, a delicate, and a beautiful plant. Nature demands that he should grow in the sunshine of a summer sky, with the free air to strengthen him and the dews of heaven to lend him graces. No, says his father, I was trained in a ditch. My leaves and petals may be a trifle muddy, and the little colour I might have had is faded long ago. But what matter? I have grubbed on in the slush, and so may you.

What matter!

COMPTON READE.





George Kirby, del,

C. M. Jenkin, sc.

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## OUR SECRET

YES, vive la danse! but while we pace The formal mazy minuet, Take heed that on each traitor-face None mark a pleasure deeper yet.

For, pondering o'er our secret new—
Love's last-night tryst, so glad, so fleet—
I deem each looker-on must view
The joy which secrecy makes sweet.

I mask my face with reckless smiles, And so would baffle scrutiny; Thou usest all thy woman's wiles Each seer's forecasting to defy.

Thus gaily sound the joyous chords;
They deem we utter and forget
Conventionality's cold words—
So speeds the pompous minuet.

We know two lives are link'd in one With pressure of a mutual hand; Bound in those golden vows which none But plighted lovers understand.

In coming years, on memory
This scene shall linger. 'Twill enhance
Our lifelong joy to think how we
Our secret cloak'd with 'Vive la danse!'

MAURICE DAVIES.

## THE DUBLIN SEASON OF 1876

'THE Dublin Season!' The short upper lip of Mayfair curls; a languid shudder—like unto that by which the Princess Huncamunca signified her emotion at 'the gross idea'—passes through the delicate frame of the upper ten thousand; a flickering smile of incredulity et rien de plus.

Now, despite this icing of the idea, Dublin sports a season, very jolly, very bright, and, hélas, very short-lived. Season, after all, is but a relative term. Have we not a season at Ballyporeen when the races come off? Have we not a season at Cruiskeen Lawn when no races come off, but when fox-hunting comes on? Have we not a season at Derrymabocklish, when the O'Hoolahan sails his 'trimbuilt wherry' against saucy little hookers from remote inlets of the wild Atlantic, or rakish luggers from the lordly shores of the Shannon? The City of Cork bursts into a mild dissipation when the first tints of autumn commence to tinge the beeches by the river Lee; Belfast annually dons very fine linen, and proceeds to enjoy itself statistically; and as for Galway! Whoop! Whoop! Hurroo for the hoigth av divelmint an' divarshin!

Then why not Dublin?—with its Castle and Lord Lieutenant; its Viceregal Lodge and its Viceroy; its Chief Secretary's Lodge and Chief Secretary; its Under Secretary's Lodge and Under Secretary; its Lord Chancellor, Master of the Rolls, and twelve Judges; its Commander of the Forces; its resident nobility, Ay de mi alhama, now so few and far between; its gentry, its officials, and its military. Such a 'duck' of a garrison!—Cavalry at the Royal Barracks; Cavalry at Island Bridge; Cavalry at Portobello; the Guards at Beggar's Bush; Infantry at Richmond; Artillery everywhere; and to crown all, the Royal Irish Constabulary, attired in Lincoln-green, like so many Robin Hoods, quartered out in the hawthorn groves of the Phœnix Park.

True, we do not possess a 'Ladies' Mile,' or a Rotten Row, made soft for the horses' feet, as though the miserable birds in the stunted trees were afflicted with headache, and all noise strictly prohibited. What's in a mile? We can offer five of green velvet in the Phœnix Park, with a raised broidery of grand old elms, the river Liffey winding through the valley of Chapelizod like a silver cord; and in the distant background, a range of hills, from Montpelier and its ruined castle, wherein were held the orgies of the 'Hell-fire Club,' to the 'Three-Rocked Mountain,' and its purple-blue tint, like unto that of an over-ripe plum.

And in our 'season' fair ladies and gallant cavaliers may be seen riding in these glades, now taking a reckless dash across the Fifteen Acres—once upon a time the Chalk Farm of Dublin—or ambling beneath the budding foliage of the hawthorn, or turning their horses' heads towards Knockmaroon, and in the direction of the celebrated Strawberry-beds.

Such hunting! The Ward Union stag-hounds almost at 'the Castle' gate; the Meath fox-hounds and the Kildares within twenty minutes by rail; and the music of the Bray and Wicklow harriers resounding in the Vale of Ovoca, or amongst the ruins of sweet, sad, gloomy Glendalough.

Then we have a Rink, upon which there is the usual amount of joyous bustling excitement; and O, such pretty Irish girls! whose orders are 'Faugh-a-ballagh,' or 'clear the road,' delivered with a soft soupçon of the brogue, which is, after all, the 'true accent of Cupid.'

We have the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts Exhibition, displaying some charming pictures, with red lozenge, all along the line, like danger signals, notably by the President and by Mr. Alfred Gray (who is destined to jostle Mr. Cooper, R.A., in a Bull-fight), and by Mr. Augustus Burke, who is wooing wisely and well those charming young girls with whom Mr. Leslie, R.A., loves to dream beneath the greenwood shade, and whose Breton picture I hope to see next month on the line at Burlington House.

We have the Hibernian Catch Club, with its post-prandial and thoroughly Hibernian toast of the 'Church of Ireland,' which is responded to very much as was that of 'The King,' in the good old times when bonnie Prince Charlie was 'over the water.'

We have the 'Strollers,' possessing amateur vocal ability ranking with the best professional talent. The special grace, composed by one of their number, leaves 'Non nobis'—non est.

We have the Goldsmith Club, with its motto, 'Let us be merry and clever,' and the repartee, story, and jest after the 'haunch of venison' revive the ambrosial nights of the 'Monks of the Screw.'

And have we not dinners at Commons Hall in quaint old Trinity College, where the traditions of Sneyd and Barton's claret are solemnly respected, and the 'bottled velvet' awakened after a slumber as prolonged as that of Rip van Winkle?

Three theatres, two dramatic societies—fatally persisting in doing three pieces of a night—a Philharmonic, University Choral, and an amateur Musical Society; an instrumental amateur Society, and an Exhibition Palace for bazaars, dog-shows, flower-shows, et hoc genus owne.

These are the foundations upon which Dublin builds its season. Let us take a peep at the edifice.

The first gun is fired from the Chief Secretary's Lodge in the

Phœnix Park. Lady Lucy Hicks-Beach intimates to all whom it may concern that she will be At Home on the evening of the 1st of February, at ten o'clock.

Prior to this a few crackers go off in the squares. A popular and fascinating regiment gives a 'dawnce' to the girls they leave behind them; the Rink has been opened; but the campaign does not actually commence until the hop at 'the Lodge' is formally announced. For two days before the 'little event' the principal streets are blocked with carriages within range of the establishments of our swell modistes. The provinces send up their contingent of unmistakably well-bred-looking girls, glowing with health and happiness, to whom a walk down Grafton-street or Sackvillestreet is more or less of an event in their lives. They are attired in serge suits of last season's pattern, and wear laced boots with very thick soles. The club-windows are filled with tawny-bearded, sunburnt, Irish-friezed country gentlemen, to the exclusion of familiar forms and faces. Florists display sickly-looking camellias and feeble, if not impossible, yellow rosebuds: and the hotels and outside jaunting-cars are doing a roaring business. The Lodge is situated in the centre of the Park, three miles from the G.P.O. The house is a long, low, and irregular piece of patchwork, and consists chiefly of a conservatory and a ballroom. In this apartment Frances Countess Waldegrave gave a series of amateur theatrical performances during the secretaryship of Mr. Chichester Fortescue (now Lord Carlingford); the epilogues being from the pen of Mr. Bernal Osborne.

Lady Beach's ball is a success, and lo! 'the season' of 1876 has opened.

And now the Chamberlain is directed by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to announce that a levée will be held at Dublin Castle on the 1st day of February, and is further directed by her Grace the Duchess of Abercorn to announce a drawing-room for nine o'clock upon the following evening. In the good old times the drawing-rooms were held upon Sunday, and the Lady Lieutenant played at cards; but we have changed all that. Quaint and dilapidated suits of court costume adorn the windows of clothing establishments: and although no person ever thinks of hiring them, they nevertheless appear upon the scene with an undeviating and unerring punctuality. The immediate neighbourhood of the Castle assumes an unwonted liveliness, and a vast amount of preparation is made for the arrival of the Court, which takes place upon the 30th of January: the royal ensign is run up upon the flagstaff at the Birmingham tower, and the 'Castle season' commences. The Viceroy holds two levées and two drawing-rooms. He gives a succession of state banquets to the elect, and four state balls, to which are invited the ladies and gentlemen who have 'gone to court.' The small

dances are for a privileged few, and chiefly got up for visitors stopping at the Castle, the leading officials and their families. St. Patrick's ball, of which more anon, takes place, in honour of the patron saint of Ireland, on the 17th of March. During the sojourn of the Viceroy at the Castle, the guard is relieved every morning at eleven o'clock in the Upper Castle-yard—nicknamed 'The Dirty Half-acre,' from the pre-Union jobs alleged to have been perpetrated thereinopposite the windows of the state apartments. A band discourses music, to the especial delectation of the bureaucrats, whose offices give upon the enclosure, and to the manifest satisfaction of a vast crowd of ragamuffins and very idle burgesses. During the relief of the guard on St. Patrick's-day, the Lord Lieutenant, attended by his staff, appears on a balcony attached to the throne-room, with a bunch of shamrocks planted right over his heart. The band plays 'Patrick's-day in the morning;' and an Irish jig is danced beneath the balcony by some lightfooted 'boys' in hopes of largesse.

The levées are held in the throne-room. The private entrée is accorded to the nobility, the bench, &c. By ancient right and privilege the Lord Mayor and Corporation take precedence of the general public; and his lordship, attired in court suit, scarlet robe trimmed with sable, and wearing the collar of SS, presented to the corporation by William III., through their Lord Mayor, Bartholomew Van Homrigh, father of Swift's celebrated Vanessa, introduces the municipal body. His Excellency, surrounded by the principal officers of state, proceeds to receive the homage of her Majesty's loval subjects in Ireland. By the 'waiters on Providence' a nod is eagerly sought for, a shake of the hand is ecstasy, and a passing word a joy for ever. The new regulation court dress is slowly coming to the front, and not a few of the old-fashioned ones might prove useful in the centre of a cornfield during the latter part of the month of August. The first drawing-room is always very crowded, as it is usually held ere Parliament calls for the attendance of its members, and before The average attendance is 1500. Light re-Circuit sets in. freshments only are provided. A lady on one occasion, who was led to expect more than 'a cracker and a cup of tea,' declared that while the 'society was very genteel, the refreshments was very infayriour.' The North of Ireland contingent, at the Duke of Abercorn's levées, musters in great strength, as does also that of the West.

Early in January the Lord Mayor has hied him to the Vice-regal Lodge in a brave equipage, and has besought the Lord Lieutenant to name an early day whereon to honour him, and through him the citizens of Dublin, by attending a state banquet to be given at the Mansion House. To this banquet is bidden every citizen of credit and renown, to the number of six hundred. At eight o'clock precisely, upon the evening of Thursday, the 10th of

February, his Excellency arrives at the Mansion House with a cavalry escort. He is attended by the principal officers of the household, and by a brilliant and glittering staff. The banquet is held in the King's Room, so called from the fact of its having been erected to entertain George IV. on his visit to Ireland in 1821. His Excellency is attired in that gorgeous raiment which her Majesty 'lays out' for trusty and well-beloved counsellors, and, wearing the star and ribbon of the Order of the Garter, looks every inch the patrician, if not the king. His work is cut out for him; not so much in the way of turtle and venison, although the menu is very formidable, but by and by the gentlemen of the fourth estate will point their pencils, and every word that issues from behind that curling moustache will be noted down, and every sentence pounced upon by claretted critics and supernumerary politicians. The Lord Lieutenant's annual speech in the King's Room is regarded in the same light as that of the first Lord of the Treasury in the Egyptian Hall, and 'his Ex.,' as he is familiarly termed, calmly and melodiously unfolds his tale in a thoroughly good speech, which is enthusiastically received, especially when he touches upon the good intentions of the Government with reference to voting an annual grant for the proposed Science and Art Department in Dublin.

The dresses of the fair ladies attending the drawing-rooms are exceptionally rich and 'well mounted.' Dublin possesses at least one artiste whose refined taste and delicate execution have placed her chefs-d'œuvre beside those of Worth and Elise. Of course we have a fair sprinkling of minor works of art, and of the tawdry, when Persian rushes in where Gros de Naples fears to tread, and pinch-beck assumes the rights as well as the duties of gold. Variety, however, is very charming, and contrast relieveth the eye.

In the mean time an undercurrent of dissipation is flowing onwards. Those lucky mortals to whom country as well as town residences are given, elect to abide in the latter, and in common with society in general throw open their doors for a series of formal dinners and for one ball. Two balls in the season at the same house! Never. A few years ago Almack's or subscription balls were held, but they have fallen through and have completely collapsed. Dublin is such a village, that if Mrs.— But no scandal against Queen Elizabeth! Merrion-square is lighted up o' nights, and the belated traveller journeying towards Suburbia passes rows of melancholy cabs and rickety jaunting-cars drawn up in funeral order opposite some house, whose illuminated windows and quivering floors betoken the active festivity reigning within.

When Lady Michel, the wife of Sir John Michel, G.C.B., Commander of the Forces in Ireland, issued cards of invitation to a ball at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, a thrill of pleasurable anticipation vibrated through the very core of Dublin society. Invitations

were eagerly sought for, the staff became especial objects of interest, and Captain Byng, A.D.C., for whom everybody has the 'good word' and the cordial welcome, found himself regularly besieged, and reduced to a state of almost dire extremity.

'A ball at the Royal Hospital! Why, we have not had one since Sir Edward Blakeney's time!' and a comely matron sighs as she flings back her memory twenty years, and thinks perhaps of her last dance in the grand old hall, or of a flirtation with one with whom it was not written that she was to be united.

The Royal Hospital, or, as it is familiarly termed, 'the Old Man's Hospital,' was formerly the site of the Priory of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The Hôtel des Invalides at Paris first gave Arthur Earl of Granard, who commanded the army in Ireland, the idea to erect a similar one; but to James Duke of Ormond was reserved the accomplishment of the work; and on the 25th of March 1684, the 'Great Duke,' who was ostensibly obliged to deliver up his sword to the Lords Justices on account of age and infirmity, at the close of the banquet which was held to commemorate the opening of the hospital, filled his glass to the brim, and cried, 'See, gentlemen, they say at court that I am old and doting; but my hand is steady, nor doth my heart fail: this to the King's health.'

The expenses of the erection of the hospital were defrayed by sixpence in the pound deducted from the pay of all officers, soldiers, and other persons on the military list.

The great hall, in which Lady Michel danced her guests, ordinarily used as a refectory by 'the old fogies,' is one hundred feet long, forty-five feet wide, very lofty, the ceiling flat and divided into several compartments. The hall is wainscoted, and ornamented by twenty-two full-length portraits of those who were patrons of the hospital, or who held high offices in the Government, including a portrait of Charles II. by Sir Godfrey Kneller, William III. and Mary, Queen Anne, &c. . Tattered flags, riddled with shot and torn by shell, tell their own story of 'flood and field;' battered morions and dinted breastplates of the seventeenth century hang side by side with the glittering helmets and flashing cui-Stands of arms of antique pattern and rasses of the nineteenth. quaint design are artfully attached to the old oak wainscots, while the polished barrels of the Martini-Henry stand out in silvery relief against the ebon-coloured wood.

Her ladyship's guests, numbering four hundred, pass through two wainscoted apartments impossible to light, and charmingly adapted to conspire in, on to the long drawing-room, all white and gold, where they are received by the host and hostess, the former in full uniform wearing all his orders and decorations. At the extreme end of this apartment a narrow doorway, through very thick and solid walls, leads into the ballroom.

The brave old hall is at its best. Brilliantly lighted, and decorated by cunning hands, its well-waxed floor shines white. The oaken walls reflect a grim polish; and banks of flowers, from out of which belts of grouped lights burst up like fiery crocuses, are set round the room. Festoons of flags hang beneath the portraits, and lower still are posted Lancers, who remain as immovable at their posts as the sentinel discovered at Herculaneum. The uniforms are varied, and present a charming contrast: the dark green of the Rifle Brigade versus the vermilion Staff; the bullion-breasted Hussar and the Highland plaidie. And then the varied hues of the ladies' dresses. Talk of the rainbow-pshaw! The kaleidoscope-pooh, pooh! Ribbon-borders so dear to colour-maniacs—fudge! ensemble was at once delightful and singularly impressive. And the music! In Mayfair ye have Coote and Tinney: in Dublin we have Liddell. We are very proud of Mr. Liddell's band. His quadrilles are delightful realities; his waltzes, delicious dreams.

And now for the event of the season—an event which bids fair to mark the year of grace 1876 in letters of purple light: A FANCY BALL AT DUBLIN CASTLE.

But once since 1798—the year of the Rebellion—has Dublin Castle opened its portals to admit fancy dress other than that which the gentleman-usher of the period pronounced de rigueur. Lord Cornwallis during this eventful year gave a fancy ball. Lord Talbot also entertained in motley. Later on Lord Normanby, when Viceroy, gave an entertainment for children only, a charming puppet-show. At a fancy ball given by Mrs. Putland, a stripling cornet informed his hostess that the '10th didn't dance.' We find a masquerade held at the Mansion House in 1810, at which Lord Monck figured as an egg-woman and Sir Jonah Barrington as a mendicant friar. The Guards indulged their friends with a fancy ball in 1873, which was followed by Lady Mackay's at the Mansion House in the same year.

When it was announced that their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn intended to hold high and motley festival at Dublin Castle, everybody expected to be invited, and Dublin society became simply frantic. It tore its hair, it beat its head against the walls of its conventional cell; scorning all other sublunary matter, it lived, moved, and had its being in the one absorbing idea of the forthcoming festivity. Colonel Bernard, the Chamberlain, could have wished the date of his birth altered by a few years, or that he had never been born at all. Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster Kingat-arms, was expected to reply to several thousand queries daily, from the quarterings of a Scrope or Nevil to the loop of a mediæval petticoat. Country cousins turned up, as country cousins do, most awkwardly and unexpectedly. Charming little plaited heads bent over the magic tomes of Sir Walter Scott, hitherto voted old-

fashioned, if not prosy; 'the divine Williams' was delicately peered into, and family portraits-' frumps' and 'frights'-became objects of intense admiration, devotion, and respect. The mind of 'the gentlemen of the army' reverted to powder and pigtails, mitred headpieces and spider-leggings; that of the navy to the garb covering the stout hearts that played at bowls on the Hoe at Plymouth when the Spanish fleet was sighted, though not by the clairvoyante Tilburina. The legal mind bounded back to the 'Bloody Assize,' and to the habiliments of the centre figures in causes célèbres; while the purely civilian madly drifted between the simple attire of the early inhabitants of the earth, up through the stone, bronze, brass, iron, silk, satin, and shoddy periods, until it completely lost its bearings in the vast ocean of selection. Queens of society summoned their respective courts, and commanded special costumes and special dances. Lady Michel, the Marchioness of Drogheda, Lady Olive Guinness, Mrs. Roe, and Mrs. Chaplin held solemn council, and each proceeded to enlist recruits and organise a separate character quadrille. Lady Michel selected the Eastern Question; Lady Drogheda, Shakespeare; Lady Olive Guinness, a Venetian pattern; Mrs. Roe, Waverley; and Mrs. Chaplin, 'Irish Cavalry' of the period of the second James. The Viceregal Court attire in the Vandyke period, the Lord Lieutenant impersonating the gentle vacillating monarch, whose sorrows and sufferings fling a mournful fascination over one of the saddest chapters in the history of modern times.

'Never,' says Sir Bernard Burke, 'was there Court more brilliant than the Viceregal Court of Ireland. The very mention of it evokes memories of the noblest and fairest in the land: of 'silken Thomas,' Essex, Strafford, Ormond, Chesterfield, Rutland, and Townshend; of 'the fair Geraldine,' of whom Surrey sang; of Fanny Jenyns, Duchess of Tyrconnell, once 'the loveliest coquette in the brilliant Whitehall of the Restoration;' of Miss Ambrose, the 'dangerous Papist;' and of the Sisters Gunning, eventually 'countessed and double duchessed,' as Horace Walpole says; who, when they were presented to the Earl of Harrington, the Lord Lieutenant, were compelled to borrow the necessary habiliments from one Mistress Margaret Woffington, commonly called 'Peg.'

Is this a dream of fair women—a vision of famous men? Have we been permitted to go against the stream of time, and to retrace our steps o'er the devious paths of the history of the world? How seemingly real, and yet how impossible! What a weird-like fascination in the thought that Charles is holding his Court at Dublin Castle, and that we have been permitted to kiss the royal hand!

Be it so. Why not dream the dream?

Yonder stands 'the Martyred Saint,' in all the dignity that doth hedge a king. This is not his Grace the Duke of Abercorn. It is 'the man Charles Stuart.' He has stepped from out the canvas

of Vandyke. How stately in the black-velvet doublet and short wavy cloak! What a flashing blaze from his diamond star of the Order of the Garter! What a sheen and dazzle from the brilliants studding his baldrick! What a lime-light lustre from the single jewel looping his blood-red feather to his Flemish hat! His George, not yet handed to Bishop Juxon with the awful 'Remember!' is suspended from his shapely neck; a neck—Ugh! would that we could shut out that January morning in 1649!

His Majesty is surrounded by his household, all attired in the Vandyke period. Close to Charles stands the Marquis of Antrim, so highly trusted by his royal master, and twice imprisoned by the Scotch forces in Ulster. Yonder is his wife, widow of George That lynx-eyed little lady with whom she is laughing is Lettice, Baroness of Offaly in her own right. A Geraldine. Did she not defend her castle of Geashill against two attacks by the cropeared rebels? and upon its being intimated to her that the defence jeopardised her husband's life, naïvely remarked, 'I could replace my husband, but I could not replace Geashill Castle.' Leaning upon his sword is Sir Audley Mervyn, who fought so gallantly at Londonderry, and who by and by will be King's Serieant and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, when the King shall have his own again. Toying with the drooping feather of his hat is Charles, second Viscount Moore (represented by his lineal descendant the Marquis of Drogheda). He is melancholy and abstracted, and is perhaps within the shadow of Portlester, where he died, sword in hand, fighting for the Royal cause. Conversing in low tones are Arthur Chichester, first Earl of Donegall, and Arthur Forbes, first Viscount Granard (represented by George Arthur, seventh Earl); the latter speaks of raising a regiment, a corps which has since cut its way to name and fame on many a bloody field as the 18th Royal Irish. Who is that stout hard-visaged man, with the huge nose and disfiguring wart, who enters the presence of the King in buff and steel, and does not deign to move his hat? A Huntingdon brewer-Master Oliver Cromwell by name. 'Tis passing strange to behold the King of England face to face with the future Lord Protector. And now brighter figures come upon the scene. Here are the Merrie Monarch and his rakehelly courtiers, bravely attired in silk and lace, and full of mad waggery and wild revelry. Here are lovelocks in plenty; and one Cavalier (Lord Wallscourt) has a diamond drop in his ear worth a Jew's ransom. Here are Lely's beauties, very décolletées, as is the fashion, with short curls over their fair foreheads whereon to suspend their lovers' hearts. Behold the Countess de Grammont, 'La Belle Hamilton,' the beauty with the cool, blue, pastoral drapery, with the bright vellow hair, and eye of matchless hue. Tyrconnel, who gossips yonder with pretty Mistress Middleton, is madly in love with her; and so also is the

Comte de Grammont. The latter, resenting the encouragement given to Tyrconnel, sets off to Calais without having popped the question; but is overtaken by her wild Irish brother, who asks him if he has not forgotten something. 'O yes,' replies De Grammont, 'I forgot to marry your sister.' Who is this with the hair of a true blonde, and the smallest and prettiest mouth in the world? It is the lovely Jennings. Master Pepys has noted you in his Diary, my mistress. You would dress yourself up like an orange-wench, and would cry oranges for a mad freak; but the red heels of your shoes told their own tale. You will be Duchess of Tyrconnel by and by, and you will receive King James II., blood-stained and travel-sore, at the head of those very stairs which you have just ascended, on the evening of the battle of the Boyne. You will enter a convent in King-street, Dublin; and fifty years hence you will be found lying dead upon the floor of your cell. Here are King James's troopers, in their long scarlet coats, long cravats, long sashes, long boots, and long curls. Sir Daniel O'Neil has just uttered a sentence to Colonel Cunningham of the Inniskillings anent the battle of the Boyne, which will become historical: 'Change kings, and we'll fight the battle over again.' Yonder is Philip, Duke of Wharton, who wrote a ballad on the Archbishop of Canterbury, and died a Capuchin. That is his wife, in the quaint satin dress and the gold-embroidered apron - née O'Neill O'Beirne. She is a real beauty, and was maid of honour to the Queen of Spain. Look at the courtly Chesterfield; he bends over a girl of exquisite face and form. Who is she? Eleanor Ambrose, 'the dangerous Papist.' Warned of the perils he was liable to from the Catholic party, Lord Chesterfield replied that 'Miss Ambrose was the only "dangerous Papist" he had met with.' He has just said a very pretty thing in connection with an orange lily which the fair Eleanor wears in her bodice:

> 'Tell me, Ambrose, where's the jest Of wearing orange on thy breast, When underneath that bosom shows The whiteness of the rebel rose?'

Richard Lalor Shiel will visit you, fair Papist, in a shabby lodging in Henry-street, when you are ninety-eight years old, with a weird shrivelled face and a sorceress's eye. Hélas! Surely that is Dick Steele meditating on the charms of his adored Prue. In the centre of that breathless knot of listeners Mr. Joseph Addison is speaking as though he were reading from the Spectator. We cannot catch what he says; but the words 'Sir Roger de Coverley' have twice reached us.

Passons.

Here is Glorvina Owenson, the wild Irish girl, paying respectful attention to a remark from the first Marquis of Abercorn. He is a

haughty man, Glorvina. The grooms of the chambers burn pastiles when the servants leave them; the housemaids make up his bed in kid-gloves; and he never sits down to table without his star and ribbon. He told Mr. Pitt, when offered the same Garter, that he would 'consider the offer;' and he will very shortly send for Sir Charles Morgan, and command you to espouse that excellent and learned gentleman. And thus we go dreaming on, until the brazen notes of a trumpet awake us to the fact that we are in St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle, and that this is the night of the 13th of March, in the year of grace 1876. A procession slowly passes us. We have eyes but for two figures—the Duke of Abercorn in the splendid but almost ghastly realism of Charles I., and Lady Georgina Hamilton as Queen Elizabeth, consort of Charles IX. of France. She is attired in a dress of white satin, magnificently brocaded in gold: corsage carré of rich ruby velvet, trimmed with bands of gold passementerie, and beaded with a chain of emeralds, pearls, and sapphires, set in large gold links; catzon of white quilted satin and gold cord, with ruffle of white crêpe lisse; hanging sleeves of ruby velvet, lined with white satin, and trimmed band of gold passementerie. Her head-dress was a ruby-velvet coronet, magnificently jewelled, and veil of crêpe lisse embroidered in gold; ornaments-diamonds, belt and girdle of emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, set in massive links of gold. Her train is bravely borne by Gainsborough's Blue Boys, Lord Athlumney, and Master Peter Burke, a son of 'Unerring Ulster,' who bear their rustling burden with quaint and courtly grace. Sir William Dugdale, Garter (Sir Bernard Burke), follows his royal master, as boldly as when on that fatal day the Royal Standard was unfurled at Nottingham.

Four character quadrilles are announced. The Marchioness of Drogheda, whose costume defies criticism, takes precedence, and the quadrille is Shakespearean. We have Hamlet—not by Mr. Henry Irving. Lady Listowel looks Portia to perfection; and we envy the noble lord who selected the leaden casket. Bluff King Hal, as a stage rule, means a pair of trunk-hose and a padded stomach; but Colonel Saunders stands the King. 'Gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.' Lord Fermoy dances; and would, we entertain no doubt, acquit himself well in the balcony-scene, did the Fates permit.

Lady Olive Guinness's Venetian quadrille comes next. It is full of colour, and the harmonious blending of prononcé tints is very happily achieved. The ladies glide like gondolas, and the gentlemen move with a dignity worthy of the Rialto. If the frog 'that would a-wooing go' had selected Lady Guinness's marone-coloured velvet hat, with its diamond 'fixins,' instead of the luckless Gibus which he is represented to have set out with, he would have shown more of method in his madness.

The next quadrille is the Waverley.

Mrs. Henry Roe, who organised this set, looked such a Rebecca as ought to have left Rowens simply nowhere; and that lady was left out in the cold. Captain Byng's Hugo de Lacy was simply faultless. But where is dear little Rose Bradwardine, and where the impetuous, fascinating, true, and tender-hearted Die Vernon? On the part of Edward Waverley and of Francis Osbaldistone, we ask why these two charming heroines were so mercilessly snubbed.

The Irish Cavalry Quadrille is indeed a picture. The rich military costumes of the time of James II., the uniform dresses of the ladies, their quaint caps and aprons, the evenness of detail and the richness of outline, form an *ensemble* which impresses the lookers-on with intense satisfaction. It is a supreme success.

The last of the character dances is announced with the march from the *Prophète*. It is entitled 'The Eastern Question.'

Now we do not wish to be considered either captious or hypercritical when we say that this quadrille utterly disappointed us. The dresses were superb; the idea possessed the merit of originality; but that it 'dragged' is beyond the region of doubt. It was more suited to a masque than to a fancy ball, and nothing could redeem the introduction of violence, blood, desolation, misery, and woe, but an especially sparkling dialogue. As a mere question of costume it was a magnificent spectacle; but we imagine that the refined intellect of Colonel Hope Crealock aimed at a higher range of result.

Here comes our old friend Robinson Crusoe, and beside him a dusky gentleman, attired in a door-mat and a pair of earrings, whom we assume to be Friday. Mr. Andrew Dillon, in the uniform of the Dillon regiment, which his ancestor led at Fontenoy, seems to be on the best of terms with one of George's Dragoons; while Mr. Lengtaine, in the costume of a courtier of Louis XVI., is amicably buttonholed by a member of the Convention. Mr.— But why continue? A fancy ball is a tissue of all that is inconsequential and incongruous, and this is surely to be no exception. That it is one of the most brilliant sights ever witnessed in Dublin; that its impressions and memories will endure and be handed down as heirlooms with its lace, when those who were fortunate enough to have witnessed its quaint magnificence shall have passed away; that Irish society owes a debt of deep gratitude to the noble Viceroy, whose æsthetic taste conceived and whose right royal will carried the now historical spectacle to so successful an issue,—are facts which speak for themselves, and are in need of no comment whatsoever.

With Mrs. Roe's fancy ball at the Exhibition Palace on the 16th and St. Patrick's ball at Dublin Castle on the 17th of March, the season closed. We have had what the Americans call 'a square time' of it; and as the curtain falls let us say, Vale! Vale! Vale! to the Dublin Season of 1876!

## FORTY-ONE HOURS WITH A BALLOT-BOX

THE unexpected decision of Mr. Gladstone to dissolve Parliament in January 1874 set at once all the machinery of the Ballot Act in motion, and throughout the length and breadth of the land electioneering became the order of the day.

It is my wish to show the difficulties which beset the officials who have to carry out the provisions of the Act in an out-of-the-way and widely-extended county. Mr. Gladstone's precipitate action at once entailed no end of complicated duties on the various sheriffs and returning officers, or rather on their under-sheriffs and deputies. To say nothing of the many notices, &c., which have to be given, booths or polling places have to be erected or arranged for, ballot-boxes to be procured, the official seal to be in readiness, a stamp which is to be a secret to only the sworn officials till the moment of its use, and an infinity of small gear for the proper working of the balloting machinery.

To town officials, within ready access of other places, these are easy matters; but take an out-of-the-world county, comprising many outlying districts, with polling places far and wide and miles and miles apart—places, too, with no internal communication by rail—and you may guess how the responsibilities of an under-sheriff are multiplied, and the duties of his presiding officer, of no slight importance, increased.

I have just come back from acting as a Presiding Officer in Welshshire. I hope the printer will put a very capital P and an equally capital O in designating this important officer—myself.

If I am great in anything it is geography, and with a desire of imparting geographical information to my readers, I must ask them to turn to the new edition of Lewis's Gazetteer (in the press), and they may (or may not) find the bearings of the county 'Welshshire.' Should, however, this important county be omitted through any oversight in the details of the forthcoming book, I hasten to avert any possible difficulty by at once saying that Welshshire is, as every one knows, a very wide and extensive county in the heart of Cambria, bounded by Leekshire on the N. and W., and Harpshire on the S. and E.

It has two important towns, ten miles or nearly so apart, with about two streets in each; but there is a far-and-wide straggling population requiring some fifteen or twenty places (more or less) for polling votes.

These polling stations are almost all out-of-the-way places, shut out from each other and from the world by gigantic hills, dignified in Cambria as 'mountains,' as indeed some of them are, though not quite up to the standard of Mont Blane or Chimborazo.

Recollect, too, that railways in Welshshire are new inventions, projected, it is true, but quite as yet in embyro, and even only at present daring to creep to the outskirts, leaving all the internal hill and dale untunnelled and unscored by the iron track, and still only open to the primeval post-boy with his unique 'trap' and doubtful animals.

My respected friend the High-Sheriff of Welshshire, through my also respected friend the Under-Sheriff of that county, was good enough to place in my hands my appointment as Presiding Officer at the important polling station of Cwrllyghffllyn-cwm-yrafon.

If I requested the printer to be sure to put a capital P in printing my official designation, I am still more anxious that he be most careful as to the arrangement of letters spelling the name of the above place, because the omission of any one of them would lead to uncertainty, and perhaps spoil the sense of the name.

I say the sense of the name, because every one is aware that Cambrian nomenclature has generally some descriptive meaning. Thus (if I am not wrong) the name of 'Cwrllyghfillyn-cwm-yrafon' means (I think), when translated, 'the inaccessible town among the mountains, near the spring of the stream.' I can only say I found the place worthy of its designation, and that the language of the country is a truly descriptive one.

Now my directions were to meet the Under-Sheriff at Abercumvurgoch (which is, as is well known, the second county town of Welshshire), and there take over the ballot-box and my 'instructions.'

To Aberewnvurgoch I accordingly found my devious way, and met there my Under-Sheriff friend, from whose hands I receive imprimis the ballot-box, and with it the mysterious stamp and seal (itself as yet under seal also), a few hundred ballot-papers, declarations of inability to read, tendered voters' papers, the election catechism of two questions, and other forms, and a heterogeneous mass of odds and ends—paper, pens, ink, sealing-wax, india-rubber, red tape (be sure), pins, &c. &c. &c.—sufficient to outvie, as it strikes me afterwards, the principal stationer's shop in Cwrllyghffllyn-cwmyrafon in the article of stationery at all events, though he would beat me hollow in other respects, as he goes in for 'notions,' such as slippers, pegtops, soap, bulls'-eyes, brushes, barm, and all the one thousand and one articles of commerce indulged in by a 'general dealer.'

Last of all, before I depart for the wilds of Welshshire, my friend impressively places in my hands a Testament, on which to administer the oath to voters when necessary; and so I depart with Bible, ballot-box, and the U.-S.'s blessing for the 'inaccessible town,' &c.

In a mountainous country so widely extended as Welshshire, with its few thousand voters scattered over an enormous tract of land of level and ravine, I need not explain, even to the 'uninitiated,' that horseflesh and carriages were at a premium, the more so now as there were four (no, three) candidates in the field for the *one* vacancy; so that from far and near every old 'screw' and every ramshackle vehicle had been engaged to convey voters to the different polling places, and for the use of agents, &c., in a very hotly contested election.

I do not know if Noah kept his carriage, but that in which I was to betake myself to my destination was of an antediluvian build, partly barouche, partly funeral coach, slightly crossed with an omnibus or bathing-machine. Affixed to it were a pair of horses, though they weren't a pair, since one was gray and the other brown. Let us then call them quadrupeds, though here again I am wrong, because I soon found out they had but three legs apiece, the other having been worn to a stump and a limp, through the sharp active canvass previously carried on.

'Anything does at election times,' as the driver observed; and so into the recesses of this carriage I climbed up a perfect Jacob's ladder of steps let down for that purpose, which were then folded up and occupied a portion of the inside within the door.

As companion I had my assistant or deputy, a clear-headed obliging young gentleman, who was to officiate as my clerk. Before us on the seat reposed the ballot-box, like a gigantic biscuit-tin, redolent of new varnish, and only wanting Huntley & Palmer's label to render the similitude complete.

Now polling begins at eight A.M., by which early hour the presiding officer must be ready to take the votes; and this in my case, and in the case of many other brother officials, necessitated

sleeping overnight at the scene of our labours.

I found Cwrllyghffllyn-cwm-yrafon to consist, like Welshshire towns of its class generally, of a church, a few dozen houses (lavishly whitewashed), two or three chapels, a market-place, a few shops, a rather pretentious inn, with several smaller ones, and a police-station. The steep straggling street, crossed by two or three other smaller ones, was brightened up by the banners and colours of the rival candidates—colours coming out all the more glaringly as shown against the inevitably whitewashed buildings.

I pass on to my night at the 'hotel.' My great trouble was the ballot-box. Suppose any evilly-disposed person should take it away, or hide or break it, or perhaps leave the box but steal the official seal! There were lots of election 'agents' about, hard at work to the last. What will not men do at such times! What would

become of me if bereft of box, or seal, or ballot-papers? Had I better retreat to my bedroom and sit on the box all night, with a supply of candles and a 'convenient' poker to defend my charge to the last gasp? Why had I not, as I found out afterwards a brother presiding officer had done, armed myself with a revolver and my assistant with a life-preserver? All these happy thoughts arise; and, needing refreshment, I decide upon hiding the box under the bed, locking the door, and descending to the coffee-room. of my consternation when I find there is no key in the door. some doubtful 'agent' already secured the means of access to my chamber, in order to effect his wicked design in the dead of the night upon my box and seal, and thus vitiate an election contest, hopeless for the return of his special candidate? Nature, however. abhors a vacuum; and so I call the landlord, who from somewhere procures a key, and I lock my door, leaving the box to its fate, and seek the coffee-room.

There I find another presiding officer who has come so far on his journey, and, unlucky man, has to drive some miles further in the morning to open his polling station at Aber something among We fraternise and feed together, discussing tea, chops, and the Ballot Act alternately, putting the most recondite and abstruse questions to each other as to the meaning and requirements of the latter, and touching strange contingencies which may possibly As, for instance, I say to him, 'I don't know a word of Suppose a voter comes who can speak nothing else. How am I to make him understand? Say he can't read our English ballot-paper, though well up in the language of the country. I can't treat him as one who can't read—it is I who can't read Welsh. Am I to call in an interpreter, swear him to secrecy, and thus treating my voter as an illiterate, open negotiations with him as to his vote? Or am I to send him about his business, and decline (in dumb-show) to allow him to exercise his franchise?'

We decide that the Act makes no provision in Welshshire for such a case; and we can arrive at no satisfactory solution of a very possible contingency.

Then my friend flies off at a tangent, and tells me of a little story as to the partiality of a Welsh witness for an interpreter. His Welshman was a witness in a trial coming off in an English court; and the solicitor (my friend), conversing with him before the cause came on, said, 'Now, Jones Williams, you can speak English; mind and answer the counsel shortly and to the purpose.'

- 'Yes, sirr; but I wass thinking I should like an interpret,' replied the man.
- 'Why so, Jones,' said my friend, 'when you know English so well?'
  - 'Ah, sirr! but you see I wad like an interpret, cass when the Third Series, Vol. IX. F.S. Vol. XXIX.

judge puts the question to him he has to put it to me, and I wass thinking I should have time to think what I shall say.'

With argument and anecdote we pass the hours, and, discussing our grog, wax warm in debate, till our cogitations are broken by a louder chorus than usual of 'Brown for eve-e-er!' the last word much prolonged and accentuated. This is met with a counter cry of 'Jones for ever!' followed at once by groans from the supporters of 'Robinson,' who is evidently not the popular candidate. The row outside becomes warm, and my brother officer and I think it is now time to retire to our bedrooms and keep guard over our respective boxes. As our rooms are contiguous, we laughingly agree to certain arrangements of mutual aid and support should any necessity arise; and I bid him 'good-night,' first imploring him to make as little noise as possible, so as not to disturb me when he gets up at the unearthly hour of five A.M. to go to his station among the hills.

I lock the door, see the box is safe, place the dressing-table as a barricade, and, taking a final look round, discover that the bellrope is missing. There, high up at the ceiling, is the brasswork, but the bell-pull has gone. Is this another machination of some evil-disposed person, to prevent my giving any alarm on invading the precincts of my chamber? It is too late to remedy the defect; but at this juncture I think of my boots-my only pair of boots-placed outside my bedroom door, at the mercy of any passerby; and the thought flashes through my mind, suppose some demon took them away, say even by way of joke, of what use would a presiding officer be without his boots? How could I in a piercing frost—and it is a piercer—'rush to the poll' in my stockings, to say nothing of the loss of dignity I should undergo? Better, far better, give up the usual polish than run the slightest risk. recover my boots from outside, relock and barricade my door, and am alone with my ballot-box and its surroundings.

I jump into bed, and, tired with travel and responsibility, fall fast asleep.

I am in the middle of a horrible dream of some one in stentorian accents demanding my box and seal, and I wake with a start to find my next-door friend is getting up, as he promised, quietly; and is carrying out his pledge of noiselessness by stamping about his room, with occasional surges out on to the lobby or landing to shout down the stairs to 'the boots' directions as to his breakfast. Sleep is out of the question now. It is 5.15 A.M., and I get broad awake. And well I did so; for after the most positive directions given as to being properly called myself, not a soul came near my room to rouse me; so after all I have to thank my quiet friend for driving sleep from my eyelids. It is very dark, very cold—icy cold—and there is evidently a bitter blast coming from the eastern hills, enough to shrink one up. Fain would I have gone again to sleep and left ballot-box, voters, and candidates to take their chance; but it could not be, and I summon up courage as the day breaks (it is February) to leave my bed. I get down to a cold coffee-room, with a fire just lighted, breakfast in my greatcoat, have my ballot-box carried to my station, where I find the majesty of the law personified by a stalwart policeman—where I find the usual crowd and the customary agents all 'on the qui vive.' I produce my credentials, and require the 'personation agents' to produce theirs, with their 'declarations of secrecy.' I seal up the ballot-box with my seal; they add theirs also; the clock strikes eight; and ere the bell has ceased the door opens to admit the inevitable voter who will be the first to poll his vote.

My official duties fairly begin. A constant stream of voters is filtered in through one door by my satellite the police-sergeant, and these filter themselves out at another, to find their way to the shouting crowd outside, whose babel of voices surges and swells without, coming in with stormy gusts as the door opens now and again to admit the constituents into my sacred presence-chamber.

Having found out my intending voter is on the register, I supply him with his ballot-paper, first stamping it back and front with that mysterious official seal, which for seven mortal years is not to be so used again; I direct each voter to go into his separate voting compartment—a species of sentry-box—placed so that I can see he holds no communion with anybody else, but into which compartment even I, as the presiding officer, cannot look. In the solitude and secrecy of that recess the voter places, or is supposed to place, his X opposite the name of the candidate he favours; refolds his ballotpaper, showing to me, as presiding officer, the mysterious seal on the back, identifying the document as the true ballot-paper; and then drops it into the post-official slit in the ballot-box, from which it cannot be extracted until the hour of counting comes. I may mention, by the way, that at a certain election a demonstrative elector on emerging from the booth told his friends with great glee that 'he had placed his mark X against two candidates' (say A and B), 'to stop those fellows getting into Parliament,' forgetting that he had done his best, so far as he was concerned, to help A and B to get there.

To return to our Welsh muttons. It was amusing to note the various actions of the voters in placing their papers in the box, their dumb-show evincing the passing ideas in their minds. Some would hold the paper at arm's length above the slit, looking at me just as a conjurer would look at his audience when about to place the lady's watch in the iron casket; and I could almost fancy I heard the words addressed to me, 'Please to observe there is no deception.'

Others put it into the box with a snap and a snarl, meant to convey disgust at the new system of secret voting. Some men, with

the organ of secretiveness largely developed, would sidle clandestinely out of their 'compartment,' and endeavour even to evade the necessary showing of the *outside* official stamp, to prove that it was the genuine ballot-paper about to be consigned to the box. One individual is so deeply impressed with the secrecy of the ballot as to at first refuse to give me, as presiding officer, his name and number, so that I may ascertain he is really on the register; and it is only on my informing him officially that we are sworn to secrecy, and that I cannot allow him to record a vote unless I know he has the right to give it, that on this assurance he tells me he is 'Shon Shones;' but as there happen to be about fifty John Joneses on the register, I am about as wise as ever, and have to proceed to sift him out of the ruck by finding out from his abode and qualification the particular 'Shon Shones' he claims to be.

This is the man who sidles into the compartment and sidles out again, keeping his paper in his hand behind his back, determined that, if he must show the seal to me, no one else, at all events, shall have a look at it.

I have the blind to deal with, who, having been brought into the room, have their leader dismissed; and I go through the necessary formula prescribed by the Act. Now and then the illiterate voter crops up, and the declaration of inability to read is filled in, read over to and marked by the voter; and then his cross is placed opposite the name of the candidate he wishes, and a list of these peculiar or 'marked' votes, so far as the number on the register is concerned, is made out for future reference, if necessary on a scrutiny.

Perhaps the most awkward man is the one who cannot read, or only read a very little, and does not desire to confess his ignorance. One such I had, who said he 'could read,' and certainly at my request read off the names of the candidates correctly; but I think the other letter-press would have puzzled him, and so I expect it did, as he was sorely exercised in his mind when in the voting compartment, where he was heard muttering and keeping up an argument with himself for quite ten minutes in a semi-subdued voice, to the amusement of myself and the other officials, at a time when voting was slack and we had leisure to note the electors' eccentricities. How he settled the matter with himself it is impossible to say, but with a sigh of relief he at last dropped his paper in the box; and probably, if it could be known, neither condidate was the better for it, as in all human probability the vote was a 'spoilt' one.

Of course one meets with the nervous, quiet, submissive man, who comes to vote for the first time in his life, and under the ballot feels awkward when left to his own resources, and is perplexed accordingly. To such a one, handing him his marked paper, I said, in answer to his appealing look, 'Now you must take that with you, go into that compartment' (pointing to the one

immediately opposite to me), 'and mark your vote.' 'Yes, sir,' says the man, and goes.

Voters are now becoming few and far between, and I pick up a paper to read a paragraph or two, forgetting for a while my voting friend, who is out of sight in his recess (as the entrance is not opposite to me), and by no noise or movement indicates his being there.

I read on for some time, when presently a head looks round the edge of the compartment before me, and my submissive friend says in a stage whisper, 'Please, sir, may I come out again?'

I burst out laughing, as the others do, when I tell him, 'Yes.' How long he would have remained in self-imposed imprisonment it is hard to say.

The gentleman, long an influential resident in the neighbourhood, who comes in to record his vote, and finds from me, to his chagrin and astonishment, that his name has been omitted on the register, looks small and indignant as he has to walk out again, venting his anger on those who ought to have returned him as an elector, forgetting himself the wisdom of giving a glance at the voters' lists when on the door of his parish church.

Necessarily we have the exhilarated voter, who is getting very lively and 'would like to drink your health, sir,' and whose feelings are somewhat ruffled to find no boon companions here, and who tells us that it 'Don't matter, he can afford to pay for a glass for himself, or for us if we liked,' adding 'that he can find 1000l. at any moment.' We tell him that when he has that odd sum to throw away we shall be happy to receive it; and so he departs too, 'to have his glass,' as he informs us. Later on that night I recognised my 'branny and warrer' friend, hiccuping his devotion to his favourite candidate, and staggering about, very far gone indeed. What a headache he will have to-morrow morning!

In each voting compartment are the printed directions, with an example of voting below. I find ere the day is over that some voter has put his cross to the 'example' on the poster, and probably deposited his own ballot-paper in the box unmarked and void.

No one attempts 'personation,' though at first flush we find two doubtful cases; but the doubts are cleared up. Indeed, personation is rather a dangerous game, and personation agents know their men too well for it to be done with impunity.

This may be the proper time to give a hint to all presiding officers, after stamping the ballot-paper, to fold it up in the way it should go ere handing it to the voters, since, unless this precaution is taken, you will find the ballot-papers twisted up into all sorts of shapes and sizes, from a 'cocked-hat' to a spill.

And so the hours go by; and as the day wears on the stream of voters subsides, becomes slower, and more and more intermit-

tent. From my marked list I can see that nearly all the voters have polled in this hotly contested election, and in some parishes every man has been accounted for. At last the hour for closing approaches. For nine mortal hours have we sat in secret conclave. Will the clock never strike five? At last it does. 'Shut the outer door, policeman. Let no one else enter, sergeant. The poll is closed.'

Now I am left alone with my co-officials, to seal up the ballot-box, the unused ballot-papers, and the various documents required to be so served under the Act. There is a strong smell of sealing-wax. The work is done, the personation agents affix their seals also, and, taking their farewell of me, once more leave me and my clerk with that ballot-box alone.

I hear the excited crowd without; I am aware how rife party feeling has become; I know many are only too ready to disturb law and order at such a time; and I reflect that if the burden of that ballot-box was a heavy weight on my mind before, it is of far more importance now, with its internal records of public opinion.

By the time the sealing is over and I have collected my belongings, it is six o'clock and dark; and I have miles to go across this terrible country in charge of my box, to deposit it at headquarters with the Sheriff, who I heartily wish had got it at this present moment. I leave my assistant on guard, and go myself to make arrangements as to the carriage which is to take me over the country. The high-sheriffal posting arrangements have failed. I ascertain that even the aboriginal machine which brought me over the night before with its 'twin screws' is not to be found, having been pressed into other service. I get a dogcart with a wild-looking horse of evident nervous temperament, and on this I have to take my seat, with a policeman at the back in charge of the important box. It is a dark night, and there is a bitter east wind blowing which renders the frost intense. We get through the mob, who cheer our departure, and away we go into the wilds of Welshshire, now struggling up a hill like the side of a house, then have a bit of level road, then hill again. The nervous horse's breath is as white steam in the glare of the lamps. Two or three miles are safely passed, when suddenly the fidgety horse shies, and runs the dogcart up the roadside bank. There is a splinter of both shafts, a crash and a rattle, and I and driver and policeman and ballot-box are down in the frost-bound road. Picking ourselves up, fortunately unhurt, the first concern is the box. Thank goodness, it is unbroken and the seals intact. I feel positively happy on ascertaining this, though the present prospect of affairs is not encouraging. We collect the wreck and send back for another conveyance.

There is no help but to make the best of things, so I sit on the

box, with the policeman on guard also; but sitting on a ballot-box by the side of a mountain road on a dark night, with the uncertainty as to procuring another conveyance, and a doubt as to how many hours the vigil may last, is not preëminently cheerful.

But we are not molested, the night is too cold and bitter to make any one desirous of being out in such a bleak solitary spot; and so, beyond a few belated passers-by, we are not disturbed.

The time did not pass quickly, and we were getting chilled to the bone, when at last a light of lamps is seen approaching. Here comes relief! Alas, it proves to be a loaded 'trap,' with an agent or two and not an inch of room. They bring, however, the welcome intelligence that our coming to grief is known, and that another conveyance will soon arrive to take us on.

They wish us good-night, and promise to tell our friends farther on. At last a fresh dogcart comes; once more we mount, box and all, and this time get back as far as Abercwmvurgoch; and to attempt to go another stage to the county town so late at night is not to be thought of. Still there is the box; but I have had enough of it by this time, and, like a good general, I obtain the loan of a vacant police-cell, and make in it a prisoner of my box and put the cell-door key in my pocket, and get to the hotel fire rejoicing. I am speedily besieged by other returning presiding officers, who, on hearing of my resource, elect me as gaoler; and I lock up their boxes too, and we all prepare to feed and make ourselves comfortable for the night. There is a crash of glass outside, as the rival inn windows are smashed by an enthusiastic hostile constituency; there is a mob perambulating the straggling street, hooting, yelling, groaning, and cheering alternately; but what care we? Are not our boxes in a safe repository? and is not the fire warm? and are not the tea and chops comforting? We arrange to breakfast together in the morning, all having to go in an omnibus which we find the Sheriff will send over for us to bring us on, and to enable us to lay our respective boxes at his sheriffal feet: and so we hie us to our beds, all tired with the day's proceedings. We have to rise and breakfast early, as we have miles to go, and the official counting is fixed to begin at 10 A.M., by which time it was expected all ballot-boxes would have been rendered up. It is again a piercing frosty morning. We pile up the boxes on the top, all ablaze as they are with seals, and start in our omnibus with two fagged horses, who have evidently been worked to the last extremity over the electioneering. The posting-master himself expresses a doubt as to their capability to get us over the hill, and tells us he has arranged for a third animal to meet us at the foot of the mountain to help. Off we go; but we have not got half a mile away when the ascent begins and predictions are soon verified. Jaded and worn, one horse begins to jib, and we find ourselves

retrograding down the hill, as a sailor would say, 'stern first,' to an approaching collision with a cart and horses coming up. The myrmidon of the law, our attendant policeman, drops from the box-seat to the rescue, and we jump out and hold the wheels; and by dint of heaving, with a free application of whip, we crawl up to a rather more level road. Alas, we see the mountain rise before us, and at length are gladdened by the appearance of our unicorn horse, ridden by a boy postillion.

A long weary drag, with an occasional push behind from 'all hands,' brings us to the top, and we think now we are landed at last, and shall be able to run down to the county town, which lies before us in the far distance at our feet. The 'unicorn' is detached, and we start down the steep road. Alas, the poor brutes have not strength enough left to bear up against the burden behind; the drag is put on, but it breaks. All control is lost by the driver, whose only hope of safety is to keep the horses on what he is pleased to call 'their legs.' Rolling from side to side, we dash From the interior, where I am, I note that hedges have ceased, and we are passing simply wire fencing by the mountain road-side, through which fencing, if we swerve, there is nothing to bring us up till we reach the brook in the ravine below. I think of the glass, and, expecting a crash, turn up the collar of my coat. We can only sit still and abide events. Meanwhile, the collars are all but over the horses' ears, and they are plunging along at right angles to the pole. This state of things can't last long, and we soon come to a less steep part, and, at length, after an agony of suspense, we stop and all get out. Then we get the slipper on the wheel and start again, we running behind, and so at last fairly get once more on the level ground. A rest to breathe the panting horses, and we get up again and enter the county town, with a certain amount of dignity bringing up at the shire hall, where the crowd are awaiting the advent of the boxes. Policemen hand them down and in, and we follow into the hall, shake hands with the worthy Sheriff and our friends, hand over the boxes, and, only those being present who have the right, the counting begins, box after box is opened, its contents verified and compared with the statement called 'The Ballot-paper Account,' and all found correct, and our responsibility as presiding officers is

An interval of fifteen minutes 'is allowed for refreshment,' and I go with my respected friend the High-Sheriff to have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and he then returns to preside; but I find that those who are present when the general counting is taken are not allowed to leave till all is over; and having had enough sedentary work the day before, I sally out to see the town, lunch with a friend, and watch the effects of the political fervour of the inhabitants.

There is, too, a great amount of election literature to read; and I wish at times I was a printer, as printers must have had a rare time of it.

I while away two or three hours till the counting is over, and then join in the crush to hear the declaration of the poll. What a jam it is! An old man is down on the paved passage, and we bear back against the seething crowd, to save him from being trampled to death; and passing the word back, others help us too to keep the multitude in check. With difficulty we rescue the man, and prop him, faint and flustered, in a recess, while the mob rushes on. Thanks to some influence, some ingenuity, and much elbow action, I get into a good seat beneath the High-Sheriff, who declares 'Brown' duly elected, 'Jones' some few votes behind, and 'Robinson' nowhere.

Brown rises, amidst cheers and counter-cheers, to thank the electors; then Jones has his turn, and shows, and shows truly, how nearly he has escaped being member, and hurls denunciations against Robinson, who, being of the same side in politics, has split the votes and spoilt his chance.

If there was noise enough before—and there was—the yells and groans are terrific when Robinson rises to have his little say. It is a little say, for the constituency won't hear him. I'll give him great credit for calmness and composure in the face of the tempest he has raised. He stands on his legs for twenty minutes, awaiting the hoped-for lull; but he has only to open his lips to bring on the storm again. I rather pity him, writhing as he is under the reproaches and sarcasms of his brother defeated candidate.

It is known there is bad blood between them, and the present aspect of affairs still more increases the bitterness. But the electors won't hear Robinson, and Robinson has to sit down and swallow his wrath. There is the usual well-deserved compliment paid to the High-Sheriff, and then the multitude struggle out to the purer atmosphere of the street. I follow the mob, and see blows struck between hot rival partisans; and see the unfortunate Robinson hustled, insulted, pelted, and ill-treated, as he fights his way back to his hotel, or 'house,' as it is called. I have a long drive before me to get home, and I make speedy arrangements to leave, which I do with a brother official in his carriage-and-pair. With him I 'strike' a railway, and at a station farther down the line I find my own servant (whom I had summoned by telegraph) awaiting me; and by nine P.M. I am once more in the quietude of home.

One word now as to the working of the Ballot Act. I have had to take part in many hot contests; have seen brutality at nominations, and every evil passion find vent at election times; and I, for one, hail with pleasure the change in the law of voting. The Ballot Act works well; and its machinery, as far as secrecy is concerned, is as perfect as possible. It puts an end to the noise and tumult of

open voting, when voters were dragged to the poll, and in the presence of their captors were compelled to vote. I don't mean to say it can put an end to all that is objectionable in electioneering; but at all events now a man is free and unfettered as to how he shall vote, and though of course he is known to have gone to poll, no one but himself can say how that vote is given.

One great effect noticeable now is, that a man entering the secret presence-chamber of the presiding officer comes prepared to pay respect to those whom he finds there as officials. There is no yelling crowd around to egg a man on to a display of his own party feeling, either real or simulated; but under the present system the voter on entering, in nineteen cases out of twenty, takes off his hat on doing so, records his vote calmly and quietly, and, unless he himself is too demonstrative, is respected by both sides, simply because neither is quite sure whether he is friend or foe. It is John Pierpont who writes prophetically in A Word from a Petitioner, touching the ballot-box, as follows:

'A weapon that comes down as still
As snow-flakes fall upon the sod;
But executes a freeman's will
As lightning does the will of God;
And from its force nor doors nor locks
Can shield you—'tis the ballot-box.'

If there is one thing yet to be provided for, it is for the voting of those who live at a great distance from the station where, under the present rule, the poll is taken. Such an outlying elector ought to have the liberty of going to a magistrate of his residential place, before whom his vote should be recorded, and by whom in all secrecy the voting-paper should, by registered letter, be sent to the returning officer, with such declaration or affidavit of identity of the voter as may be necessary or expedient. With this hint, which I throw out for the benefit of the authorities, I bring my experiences as a presiding officer to a close, and hope that they may not be thought uninteresting.

## APRIL AND OTHER FOOLS

In the opinion of Laman Blanchard, who tried hard to be a cynic, and never succeeded—not so well indeed as Charles Lamb—the institution of April or All-Fools'-day is in itself a folly; because, he affirms, the festival really lasts from the first of January until the thirty-first of December at midnight. But his was a range unnecessarily expanded; and it will suffice, since the Feast is one of twenty-four hours' duration, to seat as many at the table as can be accommodated in that space of time. Clearly there must be a good many exclusions. It would be impossible to invite all Shakespeare's motley, Dr. Doran's courtiers in cap and bells, the whole even of 'ye shippe,' or even 'the fool of quality;' for the succession is endless and innumerable, from Phaeton or Icarus downwards, of those who were invented, as Trismegistus says, to preserve the balance of The Marquis de Villeneuve, indeed, goes beyond agreeing with him, and affirms that this class constitutes the pepper, vinegar, and mustard—all except the salt—of the upper circles; but then he may be suspected of partiality, and, besides, had just narrowly escaped being poisoned by his third wife, which might have soured his judgment a little. There are others for whom, by no stretch of hospitality, could places be found. Thus, the Zampoellanswhoever they may have been-whom Cortez described as a race of hereditary idiots, like the Cagôts. Moreover, these have no affinity with the people who stoop to folly on this first Saturday in April, any more than the inmates of Bethlehem Hospital or Colney Hatch; for, as Imogen says, 'fools are not mad folk,' or even such as Ariel The dramatic type, according to Mr. Douce, represents laughed at. either born naturals, such as the baron of Bradwardine's, or an artful rustic, silly by nature, yet cunning; while the historical is not so well illustrated by Sir Geoffrey Hudson as by that Russian nobleman who played 'frisks of nature,' and acted as a turnspit to save his life. A multitude still stand outside, to whom admission cannot be granted, although some of them might have been asked to the Stuttgart Feast of Fools, or Round Table of Folly, which was abolished for political reasons in the year 1804. We don't want Dandie Dinmont, Strap, or Alfieri's clown-although Alfieri would have been scandalised had he been called one for being frightened by a picturedriving four-horse coaches and inventing a literary order, styled the Order of Homer, proposing that poets should wear collars of twentythree medallions each, and conferring the distinction upon himself!

That was an undeniable case of great wits being nearly allied to madness; still, for our purpose, the qualification would not hold The Wise Men of Gotham too must be kept out in the cold, with the believers in elixirs and philosophers' stones. Sydney Smith's man again, who bolted a door with a boiled carrot, because that signifies idiocy; Barnaby Rudge; the fellows in vellow, only fit to comb dogs and be kicked, overfed, pampered, and swollen, whom Mr. Pickwick met at Bath; that Silesian baker who thought to make a fortune by insulting all his customers, but whose head was unfortunately broken in the process; the lunatic baron of Flyeln, who preferred a reputation for common-sense to a title; and even Zscökke's 'fool of the nineteenth century.' Then who are to be welcomed, in the name and for the honour of Folly? Some would meet with a cordial reception, if for no more than the novelty's sake; as, for example, those of whom Lord Valentia tells us when he says that in Southern India a custom prevails of making April fools at Huli, a festival celebrated both by Hindoos and Mahometans in honour of the Spring. They are too far off, and their addresses are too vague, for our invitation to reach them. Now to whom does the epithet April Fool best belong—to the jester or his victim? depends upon the spirit of the joke. You are not necessarily a fool because, being invited to a funeral, you find there is none to take place; or, being a child, you are sent for a pint of pigeon's milk or a jug of stirrup-oil; or, having paid for a parcel, you discover it to contain potato-parings: or, being frightened by a shriek in the nursery, you encounter only laughter and grimace; or, being advertised for as heir-at-law to a rich uncle, you learn that he is yet alive, though hopelessly indignant; or, breaking an egg at breakfast, you start away from a swarm of spiders. These practical jokes are precisely on a level with the infamous one reported to have been perpetrated in Berners-street, of sending a coffin to a living man. anniversary—which Maginn condescended to pun about, as the 'Day of Aljeers,' asking 'What African potentate does it resemble?'cannot be more harmlessly observed, it had better go out of memory altogether. But it is often more harmlessly celebrated, and the source of no little innocent merriment, though, of course, there are persons for whom no joke has any flavour unless it be a social offence as is true sometimes also of valentines. This, however, is moralising, or austerity, or anything you please, which I did not intend. So, to get rid of it, once for all—though, in spite of this promise, it may occur again of its own accord presently-I hold forth, as warnings, a few banale texts, from the lips, be it noted, of profane wisdom only: 'At fools I laugh.' 'It is these foolish wits that occupy our foreground; they are as pilchards to herrings.' 'We call a nettle a nettle; and the faults of a fool are folly.' 'The guests were pumps, and the host a fool.' Let diners-out and givers of dinners

mark this! 'Better a witty fool than a foolish wit.' A most subtle distinction. And then, to connect a small bit of tradition, which may have its effect upon serious minds, with the subject. It was Dean Swift who argued, apropos of Bolingbroke, that on the first of April a 'pungent lie' was permissible; but it was on a first of April that Bolingbroke told the lie in which his work of self-ruin began. And on the same anniversary the Emperor Napoleon committed the blackest falsehood of his life, by marrying Marie Louise. Even then the Parisians forgot not to nickname him a Poisson d'Avril.

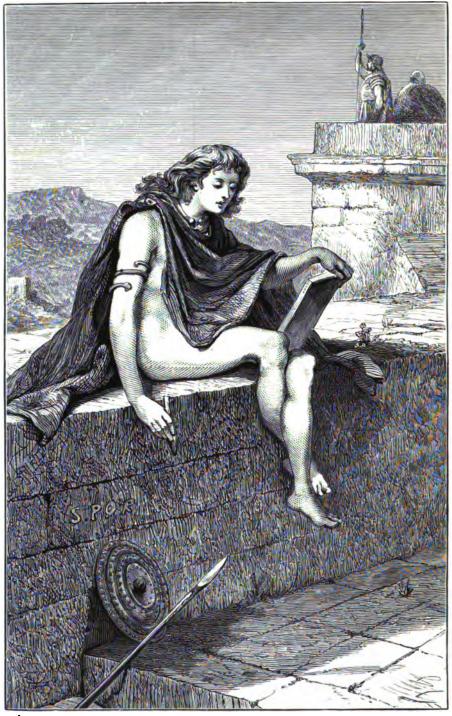
'He who lives without folly is not so wise as he imagines,' is an axiom of Rochefoucauld, who adds, 'It is a great folly to affect to be wise by one's self.' At any rate, the thing itself represents a real and essential element in manners, difficult though it may be to offer a sufficient definition of the Social Fool. He is represented, however, by a number of varieties; and these, again, by a literature of anecdote, false or true, that may perhaps serve as well. impossible to set down in any other category those who pretend to sit in the Porch, and to be above all human emotions, whether of surprise, alarm, or pleasure. In vain. No amount of eyeglass can raise them to a level with the great men of former days. Pour savoir: he who, when his wife had been calcined by lightning, summoned his servant, and said, 'Mumbo, sweep up your missis;' he who, when his man had been killed, like Carker, on the railway, observed to the guard, 'Find me the piece that has my keys on it;' she who told her friend, when the mutiny was in full swing, 'There is nothing to put yourself out about, they are only shooting your husband; and a fourth—but he was a bishop—who, having a glass of wine thrown in his face by an exasperated controversialist, remarked, 'That was a digression.' Of course, the stories are all equally untrue; but the very fact of their invention explains a good deal of what on the part of inferior genius we sometimes see. Vis-à-vis with young Stoic sits the philosopher of disparagement, who would perceive 'nothing' in the crater of Vesuvius. You hear him quote with rapture the vulgarity of the American traveller who, after crossing the Alps, admitted that he thought they had passed over some rising ground. Him would delight the nil admirari of that utter and painful fool who considered that 'the best thing about St. Peter's at Rome was its snugness;' or that other, quite on a par with him, who, when asked, 'How long did you stay at Rome?' answered, 'Only to change horses.' By all means place seats for these gentlemen-or, were they ladies? In either case what 'merino-shaped faces' they must have had; though not more so, or forming so large a class as those of whom we must be eternally grateful to the author of The Lily and the Bee for saying, 'Here cometh one serenely unconscious that he is a fool; ' the helpless ones,

who inquire of their partners in a dance whether they are fond of star-gazing, and immediately revert to the question of cheese, like Toots with the raw materials; funny fellows, who suggest whether the marble Psyche would not look better with her bonnet on; irresistibles, who wonder where a judge's brains are when his wig is off; and others, whose smartnesses are exactly equivalent to 'Where's Australia?' 'The Tenth don't dance,' 'The Foreign Office never wear straps'-leaving out the drawl and the lisp, scarcely less frenzying in their way than 'Ta! awfully ta!' or, 'By the way, didn't Adam die of the gout?' 'Any man who could talk like this,' said the Jesuit Gavesse, who hated the entire tribe with a cordiality worthy of Mr. F.'s aunt, 'must be a fool and a half in himself.' 'Rather than listen to them,' he went on, 'I would endure the most opiated sermon ever preached in a monastery.' So that folly is not always amusing, any more than the antics of a pantomime. 'Better,' says Jack Gay, who was a sensible individual, 'be at a party where nobody says nothing to his neighbour.' Yet you shall find in these silent companions not a few who make a first of April for themselves all the year round. These ape melancholy and affect isolation, as though Simon Stylites, who built a pillory for fools of this kind, were not enough, and more than enough, for all time. The old satirist was not far wrong in comparing them with ostriches staring at their own eggs. Where is the use of going into society with a dismal Sans Souci on your back, and such a scorn of the whole affair as can only be expressed by secret yawns and silent whistlings? Guarda e passa; the inanity does no harm, and has prevailed, in one form or another, ever since the breezes began to blow among the bells of folly. It may pass out of the fashion ultimately, as did Beau-Brummelism, Byronism, and even Dundrearyism, which was always better seen from the Haymarket boxes than in a drawing-room, and which no degree of whiskerpulling, vacancy, and dawdling in doorways could establish as a permanent institution, though even this was preferable to the cynicism -sham, of course-in shining boots, which declared that skating was 'one of the few things worth living for;' that some one who died to save his friend was 'faithful as a dog, though only a man;' or which hinted the question, when a proposal was made to number all the fools in Great Britain and Ireland, from Cape Clear to Orkney, and Sark to Valentia, 'Who would be left to take the census?' That morosoph, Seguy Jehan, had written a similar jibe, concerning the French, two centuries before; and something like it is also imputed to Pantagruel, who was even more wholesale than Voltaire's madman when explaining his position by the fact that the world, containing a majority of fools, had outvoted him. There is another instance of similar outvoting. The Twelfth Louis of France, designing to make war against Venice, called a council—as was the way of monarchs

in those days, and as is the way of some people in the present—to advise him concerning that which he had already resolved upon. These judicious statesmen set forth many weighty reasons why the lion of San Marco should not be bearded; but the King settled the question by exclaiming, 'I shall oppose such a number of fools to the opinions of your wise men, that there shall be no possible reply to them.' Upon this incident, Belay and Ferron-both reverend authorities—remark that two professional advisers of this description are sufficient, seeing that amateurs are always at hand in superabundance. But the anecdote is no more than episodical. affirmed by the learned that the word 'fool' is patent in every language, and could no more be dispensed with than the definite article itself; although the Brittany peasants have a tradition that it was first uttered by a witch who fell from the moon; while the Welsh claim it for a part of their country known as The Mumbles. At all events. wherever we roam the creature exists, and it might be possible-of course only on the first of April-to meet it at a mess-table, in a Court of Law, on the Stock Exchange, at the theatre, or at a concert. On the last point no doubt can exist, because a pianist has been heard to say, that he never would lift anything heavier than a piece of music or a pair of gloves—no, not for the world—because it would 'ruin his fingers.' Suppose he were made vice-chairman at the April Feast, with which, so far as England is concerned, the Stuttgart edict had nothing to do. It is curious to note from what different points of view the anniversary, for reasons mysterious, has been regarded. No Roman lawyer would plead in a cause on that day, and the Roman ladies looked upon it as an excellent opportunity for improving their complexions by bathing in the shade of myrtletrees. Whereas the pious monks of Chartreux deemed it an occasion for announcing that they would give away pea-soup to the poor, and then flinging a boxwood basin at every applicant's head. the inferior qualities, when once comfortably placed, be passed over; the human rattles, with their puns, proverbs, and conundrums; the sayers of good things, who bring their well-studied impromptus bottled-up from over-night; the gentry, whom Cowper calls 'solemn fops,' who forget what Shaftesbury says about gravity being 'the essence of imposture;' the people who make speeches, especially at wedding-breakfasts, which, like worn-out shillings, have neither heads nor tails; they who angle for compliments or ask for advice-"'tis affectation, look you,' says Fluellen. Worse than the random is the artistic talker, who deserves to be hoaxed unmercifully. 'The reason,' old Moir the hunter assures us, 'why I like elephants is, that they talk so rationally, and I would rather live among their trumpetings for ever, or wander through the dull echoes of a Finland forest, than breathe the air of some society.' Be it remembered, however, that this same misanthrope confessed to a personal fondness also for

snakes. Little space has been left either for the French poisson d'Avril, or Parisian April fool, or even for the French social fool, generically. The former, as a rule, is the object of some spite, except among the very young, who acquire their tricks from a profound study of Pierrot. The latter, proud of being a dandy, is, like Mr. Tupper's hero, never conscious of being what the professed dandy, or fat, usually is, though you are rarely long unconscious of it in his Flippant, egotistic, shallow, loud of voice, indiscreet of presence. anecdote, false of manner, now affecting elegant superstition, always addicted to superlatives, making great pretensions to science, he seldom, it is true, dresses up, on the first of April, as did the Count of Dassarre, like Cupid, with bow, quiver, and wings, to bring down 'April fish,' which that gentleman must have thought to be all of the flying kind. Short of that, he often illustrates another reflection of the sage already quoted: 'There are certain people fated to be fools; they not only commit follies by choice, but are even constrained to do so by fortune.' There is hardly room for more at this April banquet; and there are too many already, it may be, for pleasantness, especially if all the Follies try to speak at once.

HORACE ST. JOHN.



C. Cattermole, del.

W. A. Cranston, sc.

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## CILURNUM

ı.

YE who delight in buoyant air, In wavings of the summer woods, In em'rald dells and moorlands bare,

In ivied crags and gleaming floods, Let your glad footsteps follow mine, And seek the banks of Northern Tyne. No fairer spot than Chollerford,

Impetuous Tyne speeds glancing by; No likelier cast his streams afford

To tempt the longing angler's fly; No neater inn beside the way Invites the passing traveller's stay. There, when the noon is still and clear,

The wand'rer by the riverside May mark in ghostly file appear,

Far down beneath the crystal tide, The giant blocks which still recall The wonders of the Roman Wall. Or watch in Chesters' sylvan park

(The very name is Roman now) The painted yaffles tap the bark,

And squirrels glide from bough to bough, And quiet kine the herbage champ Beside the lonely Roman Camp. The pious care of Chesters' lord

A guardian fence has round it thrown,
Kind hands have clear'd the mantling sward,
And bared to view each ancient stone;
The eagle's clutch-print still outwears
The wasting of a thousand years.

TT.

Altars to Mars, Apollo, Jove,
Gods of the old Olympian line,
To gods of camp and field and grove,
To all the Roman deem'd divine;

To all the Roman deem'd divine; To local Pan and British elf, And altars to old Tyne himself. Of time-worn statues half-a-score,

A choice of heads and limbs and loins,

THIRD SERIES, VOL. IX. F.S. VOL. XXIX.

Of shatter'd pottery a store,
Strange clumsy weapons, uncouth coins;
Inscribed on tablet, urn, and tile
The Reman's court imporious stale

The Roman's curt imperious style.

A hundred relics, in a word—

Rich feast to antiquarian eyes— But none to touch the finer chord

Which runs through human sympathies; Not one o'er which the heart could say, 'These Romans were of kindred clay.' Yes, one! I found a broken tile—

Among the rest 'twas little worth; It could not tell the name or style

Of any god in heaven or earth; It did not in the least bring home The might or majesty of Rome. But on its unpretending face,

Of greater price than virgin gold, Some childish hand had striven to trace

The semblance of a warrior bold. A fancy sketch? we may inquire, Or portrait of its warlike sire?

#### III.

His face was round, his beard to match, His manly mouth a single line, Two dots for eyes, his nose a scratch,

At once suggesting aquiline; He wore a helm, to critic's eye, A thought too large and much awry. His chest and tunic were two cones

United by a slender waist; I scarce can credit Roman bones

Endured to be so tightly braced; His arms stretch'd out on either side, And both his hands were open'd wide. On his left arm a moony targe,

His right sustain'd a pond'rous spear— The spearhead was so wondrous large

It somewhat dwarf'd the man, I fear; And still the artist's thought it told— He must have been a warrior bold! And planted wide apart his feet,

Right-angled to his sturdy knee, He never could one inch retreat; I felt a martial thrill to see How square and firm that warrior stood— How Roman-like his attitude.

IV.

On the loose leaf before me now My child has drawn a Highland chief;

There is no difference, I vow,

The two are like beyond belief—
The Roman scratch'd upon the tile,
The pencill'd lord of Ulva's isle.
O Christian child! with earnest air,
Intent upon thy baby art,

I scan the mystic past, and there

I see thy Pagan counterpart; Tho' empires fall and creeds decay, As child was then is child to-day. O living age! of truth and light,

O phantom age! unreal and dim, What spell shall bid your hands unite? The relic of a childish whim; How frail a link hath time withstood To testify your brotherhood! It needed this, and this alone,

The touch which makes the whole world kin; The cloud hath pass'd, the doubt is gone,

A flood of light comes pouring in; Strange visions of the past arise Triumphant o'er the centuries.

٧.

O'er hill and vale the mighty Wall
For many a mile comes rolling down,
Its turret-shadows sharply fall

Athwart the clust'ring Roman town, And thro' his dark primeval wood Glides by old Tyne's unchanging flood. Upon the wall's high parapet,

Against the sunset's tranquil field, A warrior's form is clearly set;

From heim and corslet, lance and shield, The dying daylight's ray serene Is glinted back with fitful sheen. Where is the Roman's fancy now?

The tender radiance of the skies Finds no response in that dark brow, No reflex in those gloomy eyes;

For all its lustrous calm, to him The northern eve is sad and dim. Ah me! the dreary hills and trees,

The never-ending moan of Tyne, The thirst for purple skies and seas,

For myrtled slope and trellis'd vine, The pathway worn along the wall Year after year—and no recall! Ah me! of every guard and post,

The boundmarks of imperial sway,

To be the very outermost,

To have no choice but to obey; Exile of discipline—no less An exile—in a wilderness!

VT.

But hath he found no comfort here?

Hath his long weird no single joy?

For lo! upon the stonework near

Methinks there sits a noble boy— Silent and eager sits apart, Intent upon a work of art. A noble boy! with glistn'ing eyes,

And stout bare limbs and curly head,

He little recks of other skies,

He is a Briton born and bred; And all his childish soul the while Is centred on a broken tile. To mark his serious critic air,

To mark his pucker'd brow expand,

As line on line repays his care,

And grows the figure 'neath his hand; The proud content with which he eyes That spearhead of portentous size. Is he the pledge of some true love

In myrtle bower first confest, But now beneath the birchen grove

By Tyne's deep murmur lull'd to rest?
Or have some British maid's blue eyes
Cheer'd the pale tint of British skies?

Ye guardian powers! shield them well When all the shudd'ring banks of Tyne Give back the Caledonian yell,

And 'gainst the calm-eyed Roman line, Wave behind wave, tumultuous roar The torrents of Barbarian war.

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H. P.

# OUR SUSPICIOUS NEIGHBOURS

BY HENRY KINGSLEY, AUTHOR OF 'RAVENSHOE,' 'SILCOTE OF SILCOTES,'
'GEOFFRY HAMLYN,' ETC.

In the very old days of our prosperity, before the Reform Bill of 1832, we were the most united and happy community under the sun. The Hall (the Tudor mansion of the Lord of the Manor, Lord Rothercourt) was always full of visitors. Every one knew every one else, and every one knew their place. Such has never been the case since, I regret to say.

We used to return two members to Parliament, always gentlemen, and we had eighteen electors. As the debates on the Reform question went on, we began to fear that the reckless and revolutionary action of the Government might possibly deprive us of one representative, and there was a little bickering among us as to which should The men were in favour of retaining Mr. Jellicot, of Pilsty, a genuine type of the old English gentleman, and the master of the fox-hounds. The women, on the other hand, were unanimous in favour of young Mr. Aubrey, of Deane, whose wit and whose elegant manners did honour to us at the Court of our Sovereign. was no doubt that young Aubrey had far better legs for small-clothes than old Jellicot, and was therefore more likely to shed lustre upon us at the somewhat vulgarised levées of the Sailor King. oldest men said that he wanted the more solid qualities of Mr. Jellicot, who had in twenty years, mainly at his own expense, got the best blood in England into the pack, and had (the Vicar said, with a slight catachresis) done with it as Augustus did with Rome, found it a rabble of mangy dogs, and left it one of the finest packs of hounds in the kingdom. Aubrey, however, turned the tide in his favour by coming to the hunt ball in his Court dress, of breeches, black-silk stockings, and diamond shoe-buckles. From that moment it was felt that a man who would propose to deprive the Court of his misguided Sovereign of those legs was no better than a malignant revolutionist. Old Jellicot's doom was sealed.

Little did we dream that our own was also. Little did we think what the iniquity of a set of reckless adventurers can accomplish when once in power. We went to bed—metaphorically speaking—discussing Aubrey's legs, and awoke to find ourselves in Schedule A.

Utterly disfranchised and degraded, with the bulwarks of our liberties swept away, we were completely paralysed. The Vicar took to his bed; but, as there was nothing the matter with him, and as there was no one else to do duty, he found it inconvenient to stay there, and, getting up again, relieved his mind in sermons, which we reprinted, and are still in circulation amongst us. Lord Rothercourt, being more free in the power of flight than the Vicar, at once deposited his proxy with the Lord Lieutenant and a power of attorney with his solicitor, shut up the Hall, and removed to Florence. Nothing was ever seen of him any more, save at extremely rare intervals. He opened the Hall again for a short time, but he did not like it. He rarely came there, and showed but little hospitality when he did. A Liberal man contested the county once, and my lord gave us indirectly to understand that he did not very strongly object to him. I hope we knew our duty. No aristocratic dictation for us now. We went to the poll in a solid phalanx of flies and gigs, and sent him flying with the very weapons he had put into our hands, and brought in Aubrey (now getting stout), legs and all.

And we remain to this present day a peculiarly isolated and suspicious community, as you will see. We don't like strangers. I have used the word 'we;' but the real truth is, that all these causes which have led to our present love of seclusion have come to me from hearsay. I was obliged to give them. Now you shall see us as we were in the year 1870.

The most pestilent revolutionist could not deny that we live in one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the earth. People make expeditions to come and see us sometimes from a certain great watering-place, and take their dogs into the churchyard, where they go to look at the view from that spot, as if our ancestors' bones were of no account to them, as is possibly the case; for the bones of their forefathers (if they ever had any, which we doubt) are nothing to us. And indeed we are well worth coming to see. Here I speak more of our town and of its surroundings than of ourselves individually; for the three Miss Lopuses are sad old guys, and the five Miss Courts are none of them much to look at, except Isabella, who squints. The men are all tolerable, but no great things. I am speaking of our scenery.

Behind our town, to the north, rises the Weald, with its three forests, a mass of nearly unbroken woodland. To the south, looking from the churchyard, rolls a great champaign country, densely wooded, from which rises one great mound, about three miles off, topped with a mighty old castle, rising from a tiny village, which once, like ourselves, returned two members. Beyond Scramber Castle are the great sheets of the South-downs, with, at one place, a gleam of the sea through a rift in them. A broad river is seen here and there, making its way through the country towards the above-mentioned cleft in the hills, by which it reaches the sea.

Besides the Hall, which has been practically disused, there are two gentlemen's seats of considerable pretensions: one, Akers, the property of Sir Silas Bowyer; and the other, The Place, George Jeffcott, Esquire. Both are very old; and the latter, with its deerpark, would rank anywhere else as a first-class country-house, only the empty Hall is so much more important. There are no other freeholds, with one exception. Lord Rothercourt, Sir Silas, and Mr. Jeffcott hold all the land in the parish, and a great deal about; but there are many other gentlemen's houses, rented on long leases from the three great landowners; and so there is most excellent society.

You see that there is one freehold which belongs to an outsider—that is, Ortley—one of the oldest, if not the oldest house in the place. It stands in the main street, at the higher end, just where the road which leads forestwards begins to dip steeply into the town. A wall of massy cut stone separates it from the street, behind which are planted ever-green oaks, which partly shut in the lower part of the house from the highway, and must, our people thought, make the front rooms very dark; though, as none of them had been inside it for some years, this was a matter of conjecture. Above these trees, however, the beautiful ancient façade rises, pierced with old mullioned windows, and overtopped with soaring clustered chimney-stacks. At the side are convenient stables, but as old as the house, which was certainly five hundred years. It is a very beautiful place; but it was rather an eyesore to our two Squires.

It belonged to a rich underwriter in London, who was intensely disliked by the community. He refused to sell the place when Sir Silas made him (through his solicitors) his first and last offer for it, and said, in the presence of the solicitors' awe-struck clerks, that Sir Silas was an offensive old ass for offering to buy the house in which his father had been born. It was known that Arthur Vickers was a strong Liberal; and when this answer was reported to Sir Silas he spread his hands, and said, 'You see what these fellows are—all the same; and yet that fellow's father has sat at my father's table, and conversed with my sisters.'

The house had been inhabited for at least twenty years by two old ladies—the Miss Digbys. They were reputed by some of the elders to have been ninety when they came there; but that is clearly an impossibility, because they are only seventy-one and seventy-two respectively now. They were supposed to be Arthur Vickers's aunts, and as he declared emphatically that they were not, Sir Silas said that they in all probability were. They never were seen outside the house, except at church, and then they only slipped in at the beginning of the communion service, and stayed until every one had gone to dinner or lunch, and the street was quiet. There were mysterious rumours about their garden at the back of the house being the finest in the parish; but as their old gardener was stone-deaf, and as no one else had ever seen it, this was a matter of speculation. It is

most certain that on one occasion the old ladies had allowed him to exhibit roses at the cottage-garden show, and that the old man had carried everything before him, to the aggravation of every other gardener in the parish. When presented with two sovereigns, he asked, 'What be this for?' And after the Rector had bellowed out an explanation at the risk of apoplexy, he spat upon the money, pocketed it, and seized his roses. When informed that they were bought by Lady Bowyer for five shillings, he replied, 'She be darned; she beant agoing to have none of my buds, and so I tell her.' And it appeared also that the two old ladies themselves were so terrified by their success that they never allowed him to exhibit again. Of other incidents regarding the Miss Digbys few remain, except that of their having set their main chimney on fire just before church-time, and having strenuously refused external aid, leaving it to burn out. It was thought that the end of it would be that they would be comfortably burnt in their beds.

Conceive the astonishment of our town, when the roadway in front of their house was choked up for one whole day with furniture-vans from Brighton, and when, at the close of a summer's day, the whole of their furniture was carted away to that place in four monstrous wagons. The Miss Digbys themselves were the last pieces of furniture removed; they were taken away in a handsome mysterious carriage, having previously told the doctor—for whom they had sent—that they had come into a large fortune, and were going to live in one of their own houses, and see a little more society.

To at once invade the mysterious house and garden was the first idea of every one. Immediately after breakfast Miss Lopus was on the doorstep, where she found Sir Silas already installed knocking. They were mutually confused, but his gallantry came to her aid, and they were soon confidential. He resumed the hammering, and at length old Jabez Crouch, the hero of the roses, opened the door, keeping the chain up.

- 'I want to see the house,' said Sir Silas.
- 'Then you just can't,' said Jabez.
- ' Do you know who I am, sir?' said Sir Silas wrathfully.
- 'Yes, I know ye. Ye are the man as made the policeman pound yer own pigs, thinking they was mine. He! he!'
  - 'Is the house to let, you old fool?' said Sir Silas, furious.
- 'No, it beant, you old fool,' said Jabez, slamming the door in his face.

To have received this rebuff before Miss Lopus, who would carry it to every house in the village before noon, was too much. Sir Silas turned on his heels and left her, thereby giving her to understand that she might do her worst, which she did.

For three months that house remained empty. Arthur Vickers never came near the place, and what his intentions were about the

house was an exasperating mystery. At length sudden signs of movement were apparent. Fresh furniture was moved in, which, from such glimpses as could be got of it by a caucus of the neighbours, who relieved one another, seemed very good and abundant. The arrival of a semi-grand piano from Broadwood's, in one of that firm's own vans, was somewhat an event. Agents were set to examine the men who brought the furniture, but all they knew about the matter was that it came from the Pantechnicon. Some one (trust me it was Miss Lopus) heard the piano being tuned. and the tuner of it was waylaid at the Bowyer Arms while having his lunch, previously to returning to town. He was a sharp young man, and, finding that he was being pumped, grew mysterious, until the pumping party begged him to put a name to anything he liked He promptly put a name to a bottle of champagne, Rederer's preferred, if obtainable. As it was obtainable, the other party had to order it, and pay for it, which was by no means what he anticipated. However, at the price of ten-and-sixpence he gained the information that the piano had been bought and paid for by Monsieur Mallebranche.

On Saturday evening it was perfectly well known that M. Mallebranche had arrived with his valet, and intense excitement prevailed. Several extra people went to church for the sake of gathering all they could about this mysterious foreigner from their neighbours in the churchyard after morning service. The church was full as usual—that is, very full; the Vicar had but just begun, 'When the wicked man—'when in he came; I don't mean the wicked man, but M. Mallebranche, one of the best fellows in Europe.

He was a tall and handsome Frenchman, aged about thirty-five, and he carried a large Prayer-book. He advanced up the aisle, smiling right and left, until he came to the chancel. There he paused, bowed politely to the Vicar (who was getting through 'Dearly beloved brethren' mechanically, for his eye was fixed on this astounding foreigner), folded his arms upon his breast, and looked modestly down as though he would say, 'Messieurs et mesdames, voilà Mallebranche!'

Lady Bowyer, as wife of the lay rector, sat inside the chancel. She was a woman who not only thought it her duty to go to church, but, as an example to others, to go with a vengeance; she was not only the best but the most expensively dressed woman there, and Mallebranche saw it. She had her pocket-handkerchief in one hand, and her Prayer-book in the other; she beckoned to the distinguished foreigner with the first, and pointed to the seat beside her with the second. Mallebranche kissed his right hand (which held his Prayer-book) to her, waved it aloft, and then, with his left hand on his breast and with bowed head, came and took his place beside her.

With the exception of waving his hand about during the singing, and audibly exclaiming, 'Diable!' when they all fell down-stairs together in the middle of a new hymn not sufficiently rehearsed, he behaved with singular goodness through the service. When the sermon came he seemed to regard it as a secular performance, during which he thought it was allowable to express applause or disapprobation, though, considering the sacredness of the edifice, in a modified form. He frequently disturbed Lady Bowyer by exclaiming, 'Mais oui;' and once horrified her by letting off the monosyllable 'non' several times in rather loud staccato. But all things have an end, and at the immediate conclusion of the sermon, before any one else had gone out, M. Mallebranche arose, bowed deeply to Lady Bowyer, and passed down the aisle with his hat on, holding his Prayer-book aloft in one hand between his finger and thumb, and waving adieu to the congregation with the other.

He was a peculiar man undoubtedly, but he was a foreigner, and obviously a man of distinction. The Vicar determined to call on him the next day. 'A church-goer,' said the Vicar, 'ought to be backed up. The man set an example in his way, no doubt, to a great many others. I go and call on him.'

The door was opened by a smart young footman in undress. 'Is M. Mallebranche at home?' said the Vicar, giving his card. M. Mallebranche was certainly at home, for he was promptly shown into a little front sitting-room, where that distinguished foreigner was sitting in a white blouse cleaning a pair of kid-gloves with a piece of indiarubber. He rose at once to welcome the Vicar, not in the least degree disconcerted: 'These foreigners,' thought the Vicar, 'never are.'

'You do me high honour, Monsieur the Vicar,' he said, in good English with a foreign accent. 'I was profoundly touched with your sermon of yesterday—' Here he ran to the door and whispered something to the footman.

'I am glad you were pleased, sir,' said the Vicar. 'Have you taken this house for long? You will find this a charming neighbourhood.'

'It must be so, when I receive such condescension from a gentleman in your position,' said M. Mallebranche.

'Not at all, sir. The pleasure is mutual.'

M. Mallebranche could only bow and spread his hands on each side of his head. 'Will you excuse me for one moment?' he said; and, without waiting for a reply, left the room, and returned one of the most perfectly-dressed and distingué men that the Vicar had ever seen.

He made himself so extremely agreeable during the next halfhour that the Vicar determined that he must be introduced to society. He had a dinner-party for that evening, and young Johnny Jeffcott

could not come. There was a place vacant. 'This man,' he said, 'is a perfect gentleman, though his ways are singular and fantastic. I will have him;' and there and then he asked M. Mallebranche to dinner that evening, apologising for short notice.

M. Mallebranche was overjoyed; this, he said, was the real English hospitality of which he had heard so much; he would come. Would the Vicar add his kindness by showing him the post-office; the Vicar would be only too happy; and M. Mallebranche dashed up-stairs to arrange his costume de promenade, naturally supposing that the Vicar would remain in the same place.

But the moment the coast was clear the artful Vicar, an enthusiastic horticulturist, determined to have a look at that famous back garden from which the wondrous roses had come. Ten steps brought him to the large door which opened on it. He stood utterly amazed; there was certainly no garden in the county comparable to the one which the two old women with their deaf gardener had made.

It was a mass of trellised and standard roses, mixed with holly-hocks, Spanish irises, tuberous irises, and, in short, almost every flower which his practised eye could call up to his memory, backed in by espalier apple-trees. He had never seen anything like it in his life, but in an instant he did not see it at all. The moon looks pale when the sun is shining.

From a side-walk there came into the centre walk the most beautiful blonde woman that the eye of man ever rested upon; her hair was loose, and one perfect golden curl had fallen over her fore-head. She was dressed in a white morning wrapper, and, with the shell-like perfection of her face, looked very much like the rose which she was pausing to examine, the jaune D'Espray. She carried upon her rounded arm a child as beautiful as herself, with bare feet, neck, and head, dressed only in a sky-blue tunic. She put the child down whilst she gathered a rose, and the boy bathed his bare feet among the low-growing flowers beside him.

When M. Mallebranche came back equipped for the promenade he found the Vicar reading the *Times*, and apologised for having kept him waiting. The Vicar, however, said that he had been well amused, and they departed down the street.

To say that M. Mallebranche had a new idea every ten steps, and that it was necessary for him to get in front of the Vicar, stop him, and put his hands on his shoulders until he had explained it,—to say that he smiled sweetly at every woman he met, and took off his hat to every man,—would be only to say, in other words, that M. Mallebranche came from one of the departments of Dordogne, Lot, Aveyron, Lot et Garonne, or Gironde; even now better known as Gascony. The Vicar found time to ask him if he was a married man; he at once grew mysterious, drew the Vicar's arm close in his

own, and whispered no, that there were mysteries in all families. He then threw the Vicar off with a sagacious look, and his finger on his lips: turning round to make that sign of secrecy once more, he backed against a lamp-post and knocked his hat off. For a moment he was desolated, but in his eagerness to relieve the Vicar's mind about his hat, he stood with it in one hand while he waved the other to the reverend gentleman until he was out of sight.

'It's very curious,' said the Vicar; 'a woman like that would never take up with a fantastic fool, though the fellow is handsome and a gentleman. Well, I know nothing about it officially, and the women must find it out for themselves. I'll be bound old Lopus will, if she don't invent it.'

And so the Vicar did not consider it necessary to say anything at all about the flower-garden, and M. Mallebranche came to dinner.

He was a great success; his manners, though fantastic and prononcé, were extremely good; he had travelled greatly, and had an immense fund of anecdote, but he did not talk too much; and in all matters English he sat at Sir Silas Bowyer's feet and heard his words, which made Sir Silas declare that he was the most intelligent fellow for a foreigner he ever met, and he at once asked him to dinner the next day but one, an invitation which was received with effusion. Squire Jeffcott was not to be behind, and fixed him for the day after. When they told these facts to their ladies up-stairs they received the royal assent with the utmost graciousness.

Not only could Mallebranche play the piano, but he could sing, and did both with brilliancy and good taste. The Vicar's dinner-hour was early, as befitted a clergyman, and also left time for a rubber of whist before the carriages were ordered. Mallebranche played to perfection. Sir Silas Bowyer trumped his best spade, and then, seeing what he had done, grew red in the face with consternation, thinking what would have happened to him had he been playing with Jeffcott for his partner; but Mallebranche was ravished, and proved triumphantly to Sir Silas at the end of the hand that he had saved the odd trick by this original stroke of genius. Sir Silas naturally thought that a man who would not only condone but excuse such a fearful bêtise, which would have made Jeffcott as savage as a bear for the rest of the evening, was a man to be cultivated.

The two other dinner-parties passed with equal success, and it was unanimously agreed that that mauvais sujet Arthur Vickers had done some good to the place at last by finding such an admirable tenant. In the mean time Ortley remained an utter mystery, no one coming in or going out of it; M. Mallebranche transacting all his own business in the town, and paying royally. All Miss Lopus could discover was, that he (after the manner of his nation doubtless) consumed a vast quantity of milk.

I now approach the most fearful catastrophe which had occurred

in our place since the Reform Bill. A week after the arrival of M. Mallebranche, a carriage and a pair of horses was seen driving into the town. They were driven by a middle-aged man, with a young one sitting beside him; they wore wideawake hats and were smoking. The horses had on knee-caps, and the body of the carriage, which was open, was filled with stable furniture of the lighter kind done up in horse-rugs. It was a gentleman's carriage, with a coachman and groom travelling; it asked its way to Ortley, and to Ortley it drove; it was M. Mallebranche's carriage, and a very handsome equipage it was.

Late that evening a wiry-haired square-faced man about forty, looking every inch a gentleman's coachman, came into the parlour of the Bowyer Arms, and sat down for a smoke and a glass of something. Sir Silas Bowyer's coachman at once came and fraternised with him as one of the craft, and they were soon deep in confabulation about where they had previously lived, 'their' horses, and so forth. When the time came to go, Sir Silas's coachman proposed to walk up the street with the new coachman, and they strolled away together.

- 'They seem a comfortable sort down here,' said the new coachman.
- 'They are that,' said Sir Silas's coachman.
- 'I should think so,' said the new coachman, 'but they carries it too far; hang it all, I say, draw a line somewhere.'
  - 'What d'ye mean?' said Sir Silas's coachman.
- 'Why, I'm blessed if they haven't had our valet out to dinner three times. He has been telling me about it.'
  - 'Your valet!' said the other, aghast.
- 'Ah, Mallebranche!' said the new coachman, 'he is our valet —I should say master's.'
  - 'Then who is your master?' said the other.
  - 'My master is Mr. Rich,' said the new coachman, and whistled.
  - 'But Sir Silas will blow his brains out,' said his coachman.
- 'I can't help that,' said the new coachman. 'I sha'n't lose my place if he does. What were all you people about?'
  - 'But why did not the man say who he was?'
- 'He! he took it all as a matter-of-course—he has never been in England before. He was with master years ago in his travels, and master sent for him again after an interval; that is all. Good-night.'

This was the end of the fearful exclusiveness of our leading people. This was the awful disaster which would be all over the county in a few days. People who pished and pshawed at a Whig nobleman, because his grandfather had been a lawyer, had taken to their bosoms a common foreign valet, and introduced him to their wives and daughters. And the cup of their misery was full when they reflected that the objectionable Whig nobleman, Lord Shaw, had been introduced

to him by Sir Silas in his own wife's drawing-room as a distinguished and accomplished foreigner. How he would laugh at them all over the country! In the first interview between Mr. Jeffcott and Sir Silas, the latter suggested that M. Mallebranche should be at once locked up as a rogue and vagabond; but cooler counsels prevailed.

Both of them were excellent and high-minded gentlemen, and confessed to one another that the man had never for an instant represented himself in any light whatever, and in all probability acted in ignorance of English customs. It was obvious that the blundering Vicar was solely to blame, and the first thing to do was to go at once to the Vicarage and pour out the vials of their wrath on his devoted head.

They, however, were only met by the Vicar's wife, who told them that dear Ambrose had received such a violent nervous shock by this fearful discovery, that Atkins (our doctor) had ordered him instantly off to Tunbridge Wells, and that he was probably half-way there. Of course they could say nothing to the man's wife in his absence, that would be cowardly, but they comforted themselves by the reflection that the Vicar must come back some time, and then— In the mean time they left the wretched woman to the tender mercies of Mrs. Jeffcott and Lady Bowver, feeling assured that she was in skilful and experienced hands. But on those ladies waiting on Mrs. Vicar at two, they were informed by the servant that missis had received a telegram from master, saying that he was much worse, and had gone off to Tunbridge Wells, after him, by the one o'clock train. There was no one left for them to vent their wrath upon but the children, and even in the heat of their anger they were forced to confess that they at least were blameless of their misguided parents' guilt.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Miss Lopus arrived breathless at Lady Bowyer's door. Things were infinitely worse than they expected. At three o'clock a most elegant carriage, with coachman and footman in livery, had driven out of the yard at Ortley, had drawn up to the door, and into it had got a most beautifully-dressed woman, with a little boy, of whom nothing had ever been heard before. The atrocious wretch Mallebranche had packed her into the vehicle with every symptom of affection and empressement; and then the brazen creature had driven off, holding up her boy to kiss his hand to Mallebranche. Who was that woman? Miss Lopus required Lady Bowyer to tell her on the spot.

'Well, she is evidently not Madame Mallebranche,' said Lady Bowyer, who was a really good creature. 'I can tell her one thing, and that is, she doesn't darken my doors after the trick which has been played on us by that establishment. No more strangers for me, if you please. We have broken through our rules for once, and you see what has come of it.'

It was universally agreed by every lady in the place that the woman calling herself Rich and living at Ortley was not known to exist; that she was not to be looked at or spoken to, or her doings to be considered in any way, save as being utterly below notice. And then, with a trifling inconsistency, dear Lopus (who lived opposite) was told off to watch the creature night and day, and report to the general caucus everything she did.

The next day was Sunday—the Sunday next after Mallebranche's debut as the distinguished foreigner. The wretch was there, but not, I promise you, in Lady Bowyer's pew this time. He beamed serenely round on the congregation, and when they came to that part in the hymn where they broke down the Sunday before, he looked round with his hand raised to intreat silence from the non-performers and caution on the part of the singers. When they got through the passage successfully he said aloud, 'Très bien;' and Lady Bowyer having been prompted by her evil genius to look round, he bowed to her with a sweet smile and his hand on his heart. He completely paralysed the poor curate, who made so many mistakes in the service that he was humbly thankful that the Vicar was very ill at Tunbridge Wells, and not there to 'give it' him in the vestry after service.

Just before the beginning of the communion service a grinding of wheels was heard outside the church. The door swung, and every one looked round. It was Mrs. Rich.

She walked coolly up the aisle, leading her little boy by the hand, looking right and left for a vacant seat. Having seen one. she took possession of it; and having seated the child on the bench. knelt down herself. She had coolly taken two of Miss Lopus's seats, who held three in virtue of her two sisters, who were very much in London. Mrs. Rich, Miss Lopus remarked, must have known what a liberty she was taking, because cards were nailed on the desk of every seat, and Miss Lopus saw her read her two sisters' names before she opened her book. She attended to the service, and seemed peculiarly familiar with the responses. During sermontime the boy went asleep, and she took him on her lap. But very few people attended to the sermon, for undoubtedly Mrs. Rich was the most singularly splendid woman who had been seen in that church for many a long day, and there were few who had caught a glimpse of her who did not think about her. Mallebranche gave no sign of vivacity after her arrival, but copied the style and position of Sir Silas Bowyer with great success.

When the sermon was over she woke her boy; and when the congregation passed out she went also, almost last, leading him, and looking about at the grand old church as if she liked it. Coming out nearly last, she was naturally mixed up with the very best of our people, who always, as in a procession, bring up the rear.

She was completely and utterly unconscious of their presence, as she sauntered out into the churchyard, where they were all standing about and talking to one another. They, however, were perfectly conscious of her presence, and left off talking. When she was in the middle of them she saw something which attracted her eye; it was a beautiful stone cross. Lady Bowyer and Miss Lopus were between her and it, and she advanced quietly towards them.

'I beg your pardon,' she said, 'but I should like to look at that gravestone.'

They made room for her with a vengeance, and she bowed.

She then went slowly up to the lych-gate, under which she took shelter from the sun. There were five carriages there, and hers was the last. She saw her footman waiting, and he came running up.

'Draw round, please,' he said to Mrs. Jeffcott's coachman, who

stopped the way, 'for Mrs. Rich's carriage.'

The man laughed in his face, and several of the footmen standing round joined.

Mrs. Rich smiled pleasantly.

'Tell James to draw up the carriage outside.'

This was done, and the assembled ladies in the churchyard had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Rich take up her boy and dexterously go under the frothing noses of old Mrs. Cruden's carriage-horses, receiving not a little of their foam on her incomparable gown. She was beaten, though from the peculiarly careless air with which she drove away she did not seem to know it.

'If,' said Mrs. Jeffcott, 'she had kept herself to herself I should have said nothing; but to come to church, and that in the middle of the service, is too much. However, she has had her lesson, and

I hope she will profit by it.'

But there were a few words at the Bowyer Arms that night which were attended to. About half-past nine there appeared in that temple of harmony and concord the coachman, the groom, and the footman of Mrs. Rich, who sat down together. The footman opened the ball by addressing Mr. Jeffcott's coachman, one of the most awful people in the place.

'I say, old man, why did not you draw round to-day when I

told you?

'What!' said the coachman.

'I say, why did you not draw round when my mistress's carriage was called? Because if you don't do it next time you will find me on the box alongside of you in double-quick time.'

'Indeed!' said Jeffcott's coachman.

'Yes, and indeed!' said Mrs. Rich's coachman. 'You country boobies want licking into shape' (here the groom laughed offensively). 'Why, your masters and mistresses ain't ladies and gentle-

men; they took our valet for a gentleman and had him out. Ha! ha! Not that he is not a better gentleman than half of them. Gentlemen and ladies don't stare at a strange young lady as your people did in the churchyard to-day, as Mallebranche watched and saw. And you may tell your old woman (the wretch meant Mrs. Jeffcott) that if she don't make you tool your old shandrydan out of my mistress's way I'll pole her in the small of her back. We are not used to tag, rag, and bobtail.'

Sir Silas's coachman did all he could to restore the harmony of the evening; but Mrs. Rich's three servants were peculiarly haughty and resolute, and as they had incomparably the finest equipage in the place they carried considerable weight. Besides, their masters had certainly made fools of themselves about M. Mallebranche. That versatile character, when he discovered his own exact position in the English social scale—that is to say, the parlour of the Bowyer Arms-was infinitely amused. His role in life, he said, was to fascinate and to charm: he set himself to work to do so. In addition to being a good musician, he was discovered to be a most admirable amateur actor, and he very soon utilised the experiences of high English country life which he had lately enjoyed. In the character of Sir Silas Bowver this thankless wretch used to bring the groom down to dinner with such a perfect imitation of Sir Silas that his own coachman choked with laughter. He was very fine as Mr. Jeffcott, laying down the law after dinner; but perhaps he was best in Miss Lopus, when he, making the landlord act Lady Bowyer, burst swiftly and mysteriously into the room with some new detail of village gossip.

But of all this Edith Rich knew and cared nothing whatever. She had her boy and the flowers, and the country was beautiful and the summer fine; and there was her music and her reading and her drawing, and when she liked she could go for a drive: and he was coming soon; and what could she want more, save that he should come?

As far as she had noticed the people, which was very little, they seemed to her singularly brusque and ill-mannered; but she never troubled herself about them, or dreamt that they troubled themselves about her. It was some little time before Mallebranche had the courage to tell her about his adventures among the territorial aristocracy of those parts, which he did with infinite humour. She was delighted and amused beyond measure, but added, 'Edgar will be very angry.' 'Ma foi, madame,' said Mallebranche, 'the anger of M. Edgar is not terrifying by any means to those who know him. If madame laughs, he laughs also; should she were ever to frown, he would weep.' Edith was obliged to allow that such was the case, with the exception of the weeping, of which she did not consider Edgar capable.

Now the profound powers of mimicry possessed by our Mallebranche were too notorious not to find their way to the ears of the principal persons held up to ridicule by this rascal of a French valet. Smarting still and hotly under the disgrace of having been deceived by him, they were furious that he should betray their violated confidence (that was a sentence of Mr. Jeffcott's) by such a line of conduct. Mallebranche looked into petty sessions one morning; and the same night at the inn, when he, as Sir Silas on the bench, gave the footman six weeks, the imitation was so perfect that the laughter was heard to the end of the street. The villain was bringing justice itself into ridicule.

He was doing his mistress no good, or indeed no harm again, because she knew and cared nothing about the matter. But she was most utterly tabooed, and was totally unconscious of the fact. Her only hope had been that no dreary people would come and call on her; and she had her wish.

The two younger servants were not quite so reticent as the older ones, and there was wormed out of them that they had neither of them seen their master or knew anything about him, his profession, or his means, save that they had been hired by M. Mallebranche, and believed that the coachman had been a long time in the family; and this getting about, it became evident that there was no Mr. Rich at all.

She had been a month in her new home when Johnny Jeffcott and two other young men, standing in front of the Bowyer Arms, were aware of a remarkably fine-looking and well-dressed man, who approached them, reined up, and asked them the way to Ortley. They all answered at once, so that he could not hear what they said; but at a second attempt Johnny Jeffcott was allowed to speak. The stranger raised his hat and rode in the direction indicated, and then Johnny Jeffcott rushed home to tell his mother, but with only half the news; for immediately afterwards a groom appeared, mounted on one good horse and leading another. Both horses were in travelling trim, and the man also asked his way to Ortley. James Bowyer and Willy Lorson at once separated to bear the news, and in an hour it was known all over the place that Mrs. Rich's protector had arrived, and had brought some splendid cattle with him.

Meanwhile the unconscious object of their solicitude dismounted and passed through the house. Edith was lying on a couch among her flowers when he stretched out his arms to her and she came to them. After a moment, she looked carefully in his face, and said, 'Must we go hence?'

'Not yet,' he replied.

'Thank God!' she said; 'a little more peace and happiness. Edgar, I am so utterly happy now that I wish it would last for ever!'

'False woman, do you mean that—mean that you have not missed me?'

'Not a bit,' she said, laughing; 'I knew that you were doing your duty. Nevertheless, my darling, I am glad to see you back again. Let us at once come and see boy.'

That accomplished Mallebranche considered that the time was come when his pent-up feelings should find vent, and he cast himself in his master's arms, too overcome to speak, amidst the uproarious laughter of Edgar and Edith Rich.

'Mallebranche, you great Gascon fool,' said Edgar, 'will you leave me alone? You get worse every year. What fool's tricks has he been playing since he was down here, Edith?'

Had Edith known one quarter and told it, I fear that even Edgar would have been angry. Edith told him all she knew—the history of the three dinner-parties, and their lamentable consequences, during which recital Mallebranche dried his tears and subsided into a broad grin. Edgar's laughter was uproarious again, but he ended by saying,

'You have ruined me, Mallebranche; but the idiots brought it on themselves. Have you explained, Edith, my love?'

'I have had no opportunity,' she said; 'not a human being has been near me, I am happy to say.'

'What a shame!' said Edgar. 'I wondered you never mentioned your neighbours to me. Well, my dear, we must contrive to do without them at present.'

If Mrs. Rich looked well in her carriage, she looked still better on horseback beside her husband. They rode away alone very much, right into the heart of the forest sometimes, and they seemed a curious Darby-and-Joan pair, whom no one could make out at all. Some people would have called on them now, but they hardly could after neglecting her for so long. At the end of the summer there was a flower-show and a fancy bazaar in Sir Silas's park, to which the admission was by payment. The Riches came and brought boy. They knew no one, and had peculiarly the look of by no means desiring to do so. They bought largely and paid whatever was asked of them, and then walked away, leaving a sense of inferiority on every one else,-perhaps because they talked nothing but French to one another the whole time, which language it appeared boy understood as well as his own, as might possibly be expected from the son of the chargé d'affaires at Marseilles, in which town boy had been born, and in which his little brother lay buried.

The Riches having departed, Mallebranche, having paid his money like another, proclaimed the town en fête; which he explained to the coachman is exactly the same thing as a state of siege, but with a difference.

'When a town is en fête, my dearly beloved,' he said, 'the

people do everything they like; when it is in a state of siege, the army. We are of the people, therefore let us amuse ourselves.'

His way of amusing himself was this. He went up to Lady Bowyer's stall, and, bowing to that lady, bought and paid for a suit of baby clothes, knitted by her own imperial hand. He at once tied the hood over his head, fastening it securely under his chin, and put on the cloak hussar-fashion over his left arm. So, leaving the stockings on the counter with an air as though he could not even see such things in the presence of a lady, he departed, to walk about the grounds in this astounding guise; as Lady Bowyer said, 'spoiling the whole thing.' Perhaps he meant to.

But no one could do anything. The whole county, or that part of it there assembled, knew that this was the valet whom our people had had out to dinner. Mallebranche ended by purchasing a rug, made by the Dowager Countess of Tilgate, pinning it round his throat, and walking up the street in it.

It was necessary that Sir Silas should do something about this scandalous bedlamite. He wrote a catalogue of the villain's crimes down, and sent it condescendingly, but almost pathetically, to Edgar Rich, urging him, for his own sake if for no one else's, to move in the matter. Edgar wrote coldly back, in the third person, to say that he would take care that his servant should cause no future annoyance to Sir Silas or his neighbours.

The feeling of suspicion almost, after a time, amounted to dislike, the Riches were so peculiarly independent and indifferent. Months passed on, and no human being ever came near them. In the hunting-field no one ever spoke to him, nor did he trouble himself to speak to any one. He rode well and hard, and on one occasion had a heavy fall, which shook him severely. He managed to mount again, and the master rode up and asked if he was hurt; he returned a vague reply with thanks, and turned his horse's head homewards. This was the only conversation he ever had in the field.

And so they went near leaving our village, believing the inhabitants of it to be the most jealous, inhospitable, and conceited people on the face of the earth: fortunately, they left it with a very different impression. The reader will perceive that our people had two sides to their character, of which the writer has only shown the weaker.

The Riches did not appear for some days, and the doctor was seen there two or three times a day. Boy was ill, but what was the matter with him he avoided saying; but on the fourth day he told the truth to Lady Bowyer. The child had the scarlet fever, how contracted no one could say.

'And I am afraid, Lady Bowyer,' he added, 'that it will go hard with the little fellow. God help the poor mother! she has lost one before.'

Lady Bowyer began to cry.

Poor boy! his little joyous life was changed to a continuous sense of burning misery and evil dreams, in the worst of which his soul seemed millions of miles away in a horrible unpeopled space, with no way back. He would feebly wail to be taken back to his mother, while his restless head was actually upon her bosom, and her voice was in his ears. The doctor had told the worst to the father, to the mother he had no need. The case was a very bad one, with very little hope.

Edgar was called out of the sick room, and asked to come into the dining-room, by the footman, who had reasons of his own, in the shape of coin, for this course of action. What was Edgar's astonishment to find Sir Silas Bowyer there with a large basket!

'My dear sir,' that true gentleman began, not giving Edgar time to open his mouth, 'I am so desperately sorry, so is Lady Bowyer: we have been through it all with two. Grapes, my dear sir, grapes for the poor little man; nothing like them, cooling and nutritious at the same time. Night and day, sir, servants (lazy fellows) at your disposal—horses eating their heads off—everything at your disposal. Not a word, my good sir, not a word—happier times—better understanding. Good-bye.'

And so Sir Silas sped away, seeing the answer in Edgar's tearless eyes which his tongue could not give.

The next day the prayers of the congregation were asked for Algernon Rich, now lying at the point of death, and they were given by every one in the church. Now the poor remembered, what the rich that day heard of in the churchyard for the first time, the silent unostentatious charity which this young couple had been practising among the distressed for miles round. And our people thought of their innocent blameless lives, and of the wrong they had done them. It seemed so utterly sad that death should have selected that house for a visit, that the beautiful child should be taken while so many older were left.

The tide turned, and everything was done which could have been done for a royal prince. Mr. Jeffcott's men came and laid the street down deep in straw, for fear the child should be disturbed. Alas, boy was beyond disturbing. Miss Lopus managed to see the mother, and prayed so earnestly and so humbly to be allowed to help her in nursing that poor Mrs. Rich complied; and indeed she might have done worse, for Jenny Lopus was the most experienced and tender sick nurse for many miles round, among rich and poor alike, though she was a preposterous old gossip. Presents, inquiries, and offers of assistance came from all quarters, and our people came out in their true colours.

Sir Silas Bowyer sat up nearly all one night, because he said he had a presentiment that the pretty little fellow would die, and he would like to say a prayer for him as the passing-bell tolled. But it never was rung: Asrael, the angel of death, fled from the darkened chamber; and Miss Lopus, who all night had expected that she would have had, after the custom of the country, to open the window to let the little soul fly away, had to open it indeed, but only to let a little air into the room where the child lay peacefully sleeping.

Now it was discovered when it was too late that the Riches were the nicest people who had ever come among us. He was so witty and gentlemanly; she so charming and grateful. But they must go the moment boy could be moved, and Arthur Vickers must find a new tenant. Mrs. Rich had taken a dread of the place since her danger. So they went away, regretted by every one; the old house was shut up again, a blank upon the street.

Now who were our suspicious and interesting neighbours? We never found out for months, and then only by the merest acci-

dent-if you call death an accident.

Two months after the Riches had gone Lord Rothercourt, the nobleman who had so basely deserted us when we got into Schedule A forty years before, died at Florence at the age of 86. The agent to the Hall estate formally communicated the fact to Sir Silas Bowyer and Mr. Jeffcott at an appointed meeting. He knew better than to tell one of them before the other; the untold one would never have spoken to him again.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'my lord is dead!'

'Pooh, pooh! Stuff and nonsense, my dear sir,' said Sir Silas. 'Consider how very much at random you are talking. Why, I had a letter from him only last year.'

'All flesh is grass,' said the agent solemnly. 'We are here to-day and gone to-morrow. My lord is dead, and, what is more, is

coming home to be buried.'

Mr. Jeffcott, a slow though in the end a very shrewd man, had for an instant a vision of Lord Rothercourt driving the four-in-hand of pre-Reform times into the town in his grave-clothes, with his coffin for luggage; but he recovered himself and said,

'Of course, we shall have a fine funeral. Bowyer, I am, sure

you will join me in doing honour?'

'Certainly, certainly,' said Sir Silas. 'I suppose it is true. And so the Bartons inherit at last. Why, goodness me, Barton himself must be getting on. Where is he, I wonder?'

'He is at Florence with his lordship. My lord accompanies

his late lordship's body to England.'

'Dear me! Were they reconciled?'

'At last, I understand, most fully. My present lord was with my late lord when he died.'

The late Lord Rothercourt had had no children except one daughter, who died. His heir had been a cousin, with whom he

had quarrelled—some said on political grounds—and whom, it was reported, he hated. Some people said that the old man would will away all the unentailed property and such accumulations as there were to his late wife's family, but Sir Silas and Mr. Jeffcott never would hear of that. 'As likely to do it as I am to my boy,' Sir Silas would say; 'he thinks too much about the honour of his family to do it,' said Jeffcott. And it appeared from the agent that these two gentlemen were right. James Barton had come in for everything, with scarcely a deduction for a few old servants.

The funeral was extremely grand, and was kept as a general holiday. With the exception of fairs (of which there are five accessible during the year) our people have no public amusements, except weddings, cricket-matches, and funerals; the latter are most popular with the middle-aged and old, while the former are favourites with the more thoughtless. Lord Rothercourt's funeral, however, was a pleasurable success to all ages and classes; there had not been such a thing for years—that is to say, for fifty years—when the late lord's father died. Every one was deeply interested as the cortine came down the street, with the exception of the deaf old garde at Ortley, who never was interested in anything.

'Who be they going to bury now?' he asked of a bystander.

'Thould lord,' roared the man addressed.

'They unried he fifty year agone,' said the old gardener. seen it.'

'This is his son,' was explained to him:
'Poor young man,' said the gardener; 'and so he's dead. Only sixteen years older than I be; and I beant but seventy come March.

Young James Barton comes in for it all then."

Young James Barton, Earl of Rothercourt, was gray-headed now; he attended to the last obsequies, bowed round to those who surrounded the vault, and went back in his carriage to the Hall. It was understood that he was going to make the Hall his home for the future, and that it would once more take its place among the great county houses. It had been kept in good repair, and few or no changes were to be made, except in the gardens. They were, so it was said, to become once more one of the wonders of England.

A fortnight was passed by Lord Rothercourt in decent seclusion; after this time it was considered by the allied powers that it was The Bowyers and the Jeffcotts must go first of course, time to call. and they arranged that they should accidentally go together. Lopus, who in our place occupies the position of an informal and unofficial commissioner on all subjects, occupied a seat in Lady Bowyer's carriage next Lady Bowyen. Sir Silas would have died sooner than sit with his face to the horses, and let a woman sit with her back to them.

'I wonder if he will cut into the timber?' said Lady Bowver.

'I shouldn't think so, my dear. There is plenty of money, and no heir. I shall lose the shooting, I suppose.'

They met the Jeffcotts at the hall-door, and all passed in together. The old place was brightened up wonderfully already, and Lord Rothercourt was on the hearthrug before the hall fire to welcome them; they had never seen him save for an instant in his heavy mourning, and looked on him with great curiosity.

A man about sixty, very handsome, with snow-white hair, and an intensely amiable expression of face. He was the first

to speak after the ordinary salutations and introductions.

'This is very kind,' he said. 'As I shall spend the rest of my life here, I am naturally glad to make the early acquaintance of my neighbours. I intend making no changes here, save in the matter of hospitality. I hope there are plenty of young people here, for my house, as soon as the season of mourning is past, will be a very gay one. I do not exactly know to what I am committed as yet, but I fancy a great deal.'

'We want a little enlivening here, Lord Rothercourt,' said Lady

Bowyer.

'You will undoubtedly have it, madam,' said Lord Rothercourt, 'if you will give us your assistance and countenance. For my part, I suppose that you all know about me. I was not on good terms with my deceased relative until the last. He attempted to dictate to me on a subject on which no man allows dictation, and we parted —I to trade, he to follow the bent of his own inclinations. As a merchant I did well, as I suppose you know; I was not rich, but I was independent. I was able to place my son well in the world, and I now only live for his happiness.'

'I was not aware—' began Sir Silas.

'That I was married?' said Lord Rothercourt. 'Why, no. The fact is that that was the cause of quarrel between me and my late relative. I am obliged to clear all this up with you to avoid mistakes. My late wife was a poor clergyman's daughter, and the match was strongly disapproved of by my relative. It was not necessary that it should be talked about. I thought it better for my son's prospects that it should not be; my relative might have injured him in his career and in his future prospects if I had thwarted him in any way. I have done as he desired; and to you, Sir Silas and Mr. Jeffcott, I offer these few explanations, as to my future neighbours.'

'Then,' said Sir Silas, 'there is a Lord Descard?' for he re-

membered the second title once borne by the late lord.

'Assuredly,' said Lord Rothercourt; 'and you shall see him at once.' And, rising, he went to the door and called, 'Descard.'

Three people at once entered the room from the conservatory rather tumultuously. They had not seen the carriages arrive, and were in the act of gardening. They were utterly taken aback by

seeing visitors, but not half so much as the visitors were by seeing them.

Boy first, who, after a glance round, ran to Miss Lopus, and clambering on her, covered her face with kisses. Next Mr. and Mrs. Rich—now Lord and Lady Descard—looking handsomer and jollier than ever.

How they all laughed!

'To think of its being you!' said Sir Silas. 'How badly we did treat you, to be sure! What a parcel of stuck-up fools you

must have thought us!'

'Look here,' said Lady Descard, 'I always had a dread and horror of changing my rank, for I was so happy as I was; but I do not regret now that we came here disguised, and with a false name, to look at the estate which our father says that we are to take possession of; because we have become acquainted with the kindest and most loving of neighbours. You English are proud; so are we Magyars. You English are hospitable and kind; so are we. You did not dream that I was an Hungarian; you would have been more suspicious of me than you were, perhaps. But I am an Englishwoman new, and you shall be fond of me.'

'Well,' said Lord Rothercourt, 'you know your future host and hostess, my dear neighbours. They will give you a good welcome to the old Hall as long as I live, and I hope many a year afterwards.'

At this moment Mallebranche entered the room swiftly, bore straight down on Sir Silas Bowyer, and clasped him to his bosom.

'My little Silas,' he said, 'do I meet you again in circumstances so happy! Go, little Silas; for the future our hearts are as one. No clouds shall for the future obscure our mutual affection. My little rabbit, my little dormouse, my little marmot!' And so, with another and closer embrace, he disengaged himself from Sir Silas, and sped out of the room as fast as he had come into it.

And I think that few parishes are much happier than ours now. Mallebranche says that that follows of necessity. Gascony, he says, being the centre of ideas, it is only necessary to introduce one Gascon into every English parish to make it as happy as ours. But, on the other hand, Sir Silas Bowyer declares that Mallebranche is an uncertified lunatic.

#### 'PRETENDERS'

When Henry Stuart, Cardinal of York, became by the death of his brother Henry IX. of England, he caused a medal to be struck, with the legend, 'King by the grace of God, but not by the will of men.' It is this latter reservation that has proved the invariable stumbling-block with Pretenders. Specimens of this class are to be found in every walk of life. We are not now speaking of those vulgar aspirants to other people's property who will continue to the end of time, but of those who are born with that unblessed heritage—a disputable title. Even of such men history supplies us with more instances than we can enumerate here.

For the present we must content ourselves with the one whose name has for some time been so prominently before us. herents of Legitimacy in Spain claim Don Carlos as their rightful king, and dub Alfonso a Pretender. They ignore the act which was extorted from Ferdinand under petticoat influence, and they take their stand on divine right; while their opponents plead the 'will of the people.' There is no country of which it is so rash to prophesy anything as of Spain; there, anything but the probable is possible. you ask a Spaniard what are the future hopes of Carlism, he answers, Quien sabe? and perhaps he may be right, for there is a strange vitality about Pretenders. For some reason they seldom die fighting among their brave soldiers. What violent deaths they have incurred have been rather at the hands of the executioner, after being dragged through the streets on a hurdle. Don Carlos, not having the 'silver streak'-sometimes a questionable blessing-between him and safety, has been spared the five months' wandering among the mountains which his namesake underwent; but, had it been necessary, we cannot doubt that he would have been shielded with the same generous disregard of consequences, the same scrupulous fidelity, which the Highlanders displayed to their prince. The world is open to him, and wherever he may choose to fix his residence, he need not fear arrest and deportation; people have grown too much accustomed to kings out of place to take much heed of his movements.

One consolation under the sting of disappointed ambition the Pretender rarely lacks, viz. the passionate devotion of his partisans. Failure may dog his steps till all hope is lost; but brighter glows the flame of loyalty from the very efforts which are made to stifle it. In these material days we are half ashamed to recollect the idolatrous love which was lavished on our own Prince Charlie, whom for awhile

we will contrast with his Spanish namesake. The tale of those times would seem whimsical and scarce credible, had we not seen it reenacted under our own eyes in the Highlands of Spain. Many a stubbornly-contested battle has proved that the men did not stint their blood; and the cherished household gods which have found their way, one after another, to market, show how those who stayed at home have pinched themselves for the cause they loved. The Scottish maiden sang:

'How proud were we of our young prince, And of his native sway; But all our hopes are past and gone Upon Culloden day;'

and, fired by a like devotion, the Spanish girls have stripped themselves of their jewels, and even their beloved fans, with all their memories of past love-scenes in happier days. There have been not a few instances during the weary struggle which recall the heroism of the peasants of La Vendée, or of that gallant Highlander whose prayer to God was that he might die on the field of battle fighting for his king and country. We have seen the same crowding of all ages and sexes to catch a glimpse of their prince, the same kissing of hands, nay feet; for this was the idol in whose cause an older generation fought, and for whose coming Basque and Navarrese mothers taught their children to pray. Relics are out of date now, else we could believe that some loving devotee had hoarded a memento of her prince—a lock of hair or some shreds of his dress—to be handed down as a precious heritage to her grandchildren; or, like Flora Macdonald, had piously put away the sheets of his bed to be used as her own winding-sheet.

But it must not be supposed that all adherents of 'the good cause' are like these. There are the Simon Lovats-shifty diplomatists-eagerly watching the movements of the weathercock. Things look bad now,-but a Pretender never dies, le roi est mort, vive le roi, -and sorely put to it how to divine the signs of the times have these crafty trimmers been of late. They have their notes of hand for services received. King's memories are short; but these can hardly fail to be honoured if Carlos ever sits on the throne of his fathers. So they put them away carefully, as the Highlander did the old boots which he had taken in lieu of his new ones from Prince Charlie, saying that he would bring them with him when he came to pay his court at St. James's. Then, too, even in his own country there are foes, foes more worthy of consideration than false friends. There were men who remembered the sorrow and desolation of the old Carlist war rather than its glory, and, rising superior to their traditions, preferred to cast in their lot with the nation. It was in a like spirit that Lord Kilmarnock's retainers replied, when solicited to join the standard, that, 'if they presented him with their

guns, it would be with the muzzle till him.' We have heard no recorded instance in the late campaign of a half-hearted partisan adopting the ingenious plan of making himself so drunk when the prince came to his house that he was incapable of transacting business; but many doubtless must have wished, with the preacher, that it would please the Lord to give a heavenly crown to the young man who had come among them to seek an earthly one.

It is curious to note how necessary, in his own estimation, a Pretender is to the welfare of his people. Charles Edward asserts that his sole intention is to restore to his father's subjects the full enjoyment of their religion, laws, and liberties. He contrasts the misfortunes and degradation which they have undergone during the fifty-seven years of his family's exile with the prosperity which his father would confer upon them.

'Have you any laws to mend?
Or have you any grievance?

\* \* \* \*

Come chapping to my father's door,
You need not doubt of access.'

It may be that in this there was some lingering memory of that touching petition which the gentlemen of England sent to his royal ancestor, Charles II. They had tried the new order of things, with its high-flown promises, and found it wanting; and in their despair and humiliation they turned to their king once more, and prayed him to come back again. It seems, however, the necessary style of such proclamations. Don Carlos speaks with the unhesitating authority of one who occupies rather than of one who claims a throne; he comes, like some paladin of old, to free his country from the hydraheaded monster of revolution. Peace, religion, and the sanctity of the hearth will return at his bidding, and his country will once more lift up her head when she has accepted the guidance against which she has impiously rebelled. But, charm he never so wisely, the people will not listen-old names fall dead upon their ears. 'Divine right,' they say, is an obsolete term; and they will not stop to examine the genealogies of heralds.

To be born, then, heir to a disputed title, however grand, will be accounted a lot which no wise man would covet. One dazzling prize, like that which Louis Napoleon drew, is not enough to lure men to a lottery with such countless blanks. There is for the Pretender a youth of poverty and seclusion, viewed with indifference by the busy throng around him, except when some turn of Fortune's wheel seems to lift him for awhile nearer to the object of his hopes; then there is a stir among the seedy placemen, and a few gather to his side; but a prince of any discernment, while he accepts their countenance, must smile sadly at their calculating affection. He has had opportunity to mark their ways too often, as the balance inclines

from one side to the other, to place any trust in them. Then, if the long-yearned-for moment ever comes, there is a brief interval of fevered hope. The retiring youth is at the head of armies, amid crowds delirious with delight; there is the intoxication of victory, followed by sickening suspense; then defeat, and a future life of dreary exile, the shadow intensified by the glare of a few hours of triumph. What words can better express the dulness of this hopeful, yet hopeless, exile than Charles Edward's outburst of disgust: 'De vivre et pas vivre est beaucoup pis que de mourir.'

It may be that they have grown too common of late, these crownless kings; but certain it is that they do not attract the romantic interest which centred round our own Pretender. Perchance the noble constancy of his followers was reflected on him. touching to see how they watched over him in his exile, lamenting his growing frailties, and warning him how it robbed him of his people's affection, and praying for an heir to be born to him who might hand-on the line. At length there comes a brief paragraph to tell them that Mr. James Misfortunate (the old chevalier) is no more. Charles Edward becomes their king. The love of his followers seems quickened, if that could be. They take a most affectionate and intimate interest in his personal appearance, his eating and drinking, and every detail of his private life; they are full of his return, and carry about treasonable missives with schemes for his restoration, in which he is designated under the sobriquets of 'Cousin Peggy,' 'my favourite lady,' &c. But nothing came of it. He was called Il re at Rome: but he had to submit to all sorts of petty indignities, and when he died the news excited little general interest. Henry IX, became king, and died, stripped of his wealth, a pensioner of his successful rival.

As you enter one of the west doors of St. Peter's a monument of white marble catches your eye, inscribed with a brief record of the three last Stuart kings. It is the grave of many hopes, yet thousands of their fellow-countrymen hurry past it unheeding. You cannot kill loyalty, but it dies of inanition. The strong men and women whose religion it was pass away, and it becomes the badge of age and weakness, lingering last in some faithful woman's heart, or amid the doting dreams of a few gray-haired followers, who will not believe that their prince is dead, but look as confidently for his second coming as the Jews do for their Messiah.

We hear at times of correspondence and intrigue among the kings without kingdoms who are scattered over the Continent, from the heel of Italy to the shores of the Baltic; but we doubt whether any of them have much hope of ever 'enjoying their own again.' They talk querulously of the 'detestable age' in which their lot is cast; and indeed it is in the temper of the times that they find their most serious obstacle. If Ferdinand of Naples had given his long-suffer-

ing people the 'two constitutions' which he once jocularly offered them, he would probably have been swept away just as the benevolent ruler of Tuscany was; and if all the liberal aspirations with which Pio Nono dazzled the imagination of Young Italy had been gratified, it would not have sufficed to stem the tide which was setting for Unity. Time, too, is ever against Pretenders. What was possible in 1715 was harder of accomplishment in 1745; and the Carlism of the present day has lost much of the fervour of a former generation. They have suffered, likewise, from the frequent examples which later days have afforded that nations may prosper, though the wrong man be seated on the throne.

## WAITING

Dark, silent, cold, the sad earth lies,
Waiting to hear the blackbird sing,
Waiting late change of Winter's sighs
And tears, to laugh and song of Spring.
So, under leaden skies, I while
My heart's lone winter, sad and dumb,
Watching until my Spring shall smile,
Waiting what time my love will come.

The crocus soon, from paper fold,
A cup of flame will burst; and soon
The butterfly, in coat of gold
And purple, scorn its pale cocoon;
Soon shall I hear the cuckoo's cry,
See swallows sail from o'er the sea.
Soul of my soul! take wings and fly;
Come, my life's Spring, at last to me!

Mild eyes, like Spring's eyes, mild and fair!
Sweet mouth, more sweet than Spring's first rose!
More than Spring's rarest singers rare
Music and voice my heart well knows!
Ah! if for you I wait in vain,
No sapphire roof, no emerald floor,
No waking bud, no whispering rain,
Not Spring herself, will please me more!

JAMES MEW.

### AN ILL-CONDUCTED CONDUCTOR

BY FREDERICK TALBOT, AUTHOR OF 'THAT EVENTFUL NIGHT,' 'JACK PUGH'S LEGACY,' ETC.

When I was a schoolboy, and used to go to London for the holidays, among my most pleasing recollections on my return to Mr. Tawse's academy were the cries of the omnibus conductor. With two forms piled one on the other, a sympathising schoolfellow perched at one end as driver, it was my delight to hang on to the extreme end and act the 'cad,' with greater fluency than accuracy, and ignoring strict topographical unities. I would rattle out a long list of destinations in the most approved sing-song. I would 'run in' imaginary old ladies, and defraud equally unsubstantial stout old gentlemen out of their change. I would exchange gay chaff with rivals, and hurl satirical remarks at visionary policemen.

It was not, however, my early inclinations that led me into the path of life I at present follow, but rather a hard necessity—the inability to earn my living in any other way. I am an unfortunate person. I am sober and industrious, and possessed of some little ability; but everything has gone wrong with me, and I can't help thinking that I have been the victim of some little persecution. I made an enemy in early life, and I can trace the effect of his sinister influence at every step of my career.

My boyhood's home was comfortable and genteel. was a widow with a sufficient income. I was an only son, with but one sister, who was five or six years older than myself. I was the spoilt child of the establishment. At fourteen I was a merry mischief-loving boy, somewhat of a nuisance, I daresay, to my elders; but thoroughly happy and self-satisfied. Then an evil influence appeared upon the scene—a stout ponderous man, dressed in black, with flabby pendulous cheeks, and eyes sunken but bright, like a pig's. I hated him from the first, and he returned my aversion with interest. He concealed his sentiments, however, till he had fairly established his footing in our family. When I heard that he was to marry my sister Caroline, my rage and indignation knew no I abused him frightfully. I disgraced myself, I daresay; but still, although the manner might be objectionable, the matter was true enough. He was a beast, and his name was Balker.

He was in the drug trade, I believe, and a struggling man at that time. He had a family, too, being a widower. My sister Caroline's portion set him up in business for himself, in which he afterwards amassed a considerable fortune. His eldest boy came to

see us once, and I thrashed him one day soundly. He was a spiteful sneak, and I got into nice trouble through him, whilst he never forgave me for that thrashing, neither he nor his father.

Everybody, however, cried shame upon me for my conduct in respect to Carry's engagement; for people hadn't found him out as I had. When he nearly broke his neck over a cord I had slyly stretched across the garden-path, and I avowed and gloried in the deed, it was generally said that I ought to have been sent to prison. Instead of that, however, my mother consented that he should give me a good horsewhipping. He tied me up with cords and thrashed me awfully; but I have the satisfaction of thinking that I managed to get hold of his leg with my teeth, and left a mark upon him for his life.

When the wedding-day came, although I was forced to go to church, yet I resolutely turned my back on the proceedings, and made faces expressive of scorn and contempt at the little boys up in the gallery.

After the marriage Balker ruled our house in everything. My mother was a gentle weak woman, and Caroline worshipped him. One of his first improvements was to send me to a warehouse in the City of London, where I had to sweep out the floors and make myself generally useful.

I was not likely to do much at this, and, after putting up with it as long as I could, I ran away and went back to mother's house. There, as luck would have it, my sister Caroline—he always made use of our house as a hospital—was being laid up with an infant. She went into hysterics about me, and I was hauled off and taken back to London like a criminal. Then, of course, owing to Balker's suggestions, my employers gave a very bad account of me, and refused to take me back; so that Balker, to get rid of me, placed me on board an emigrant ship bound for Australia that belonged to a friend of his. Here I was treated like a dog, and as soon as we reached Melbourne I ran away to the diggings. And now I was in a line that just suited me. I had no great luck, but was making my living, and enjoyed myself first rate. So pleased was I with myself, that I must needs write home to mother, with a packet of gold dust and a lot of stories about the diggings. I was even so much mollified that I sent my love to Carry and kind regards to Balker.

Well, it so happened that my letter reached home just after Carry and mother had fallen out, and mother had mustered up spirit to send 'em out of the house and get rid of them. And she wrote to me, poor woman, such a kind letter. I was her own dear darling boy, and she saw now how that wily Balker had set her against me. But if I'd come home now and close her eyes, all that she had would be mine, and I should take my proper place in the world. Added to that she sent me a bank post-bill for a hundred pounds to pay my expenses.

After that I felt I was bound to go, and yet things kept turning up that hindered me from starting. I had to finish out a piece with my mates, and then I waited for a chum of mine who drove a 'bus in Melbourne, who was going home too; so that it was a year or more before I found myself anchored in the Downs, with the white cliffs of old England shining in the distance. I landed there and made my way, without troubling myself about my baggage, just as I was, half sailor, half digger, across the country to Biddlesden, where mother lived.

I fancy I see the place now—a red-brick house, with bow-windows kept wonderfully bright, wire blinds, and green venetians; the High-street with turf by the sides, and nice trees growing here and there. It looked so quiet and cheerful, with the sun shining brightly on everything, that I said to myself, quite in the poetic vein, 'If there's peace to be found in the world, the heart that is humble may hope for it here.'

There were beautiful white steps up to mother's door, and I walked up them with a strange uneasy feeling, half joy and half foreboding. It was just four o'clock. Mother would be sitting by the fire. She always had a bit of fire, except in the very hottest weather. Dinner had just been taken away. There would be two decanters on the table in little round stands, a few biscuits, two or three apples, and some walnuts, in dishes of old china. Mother would have her feet on the fender, with her dress tucked over her knees, and her black quilted-satin petticoat warming in the blaze. I would just pop in quietly. 'Hallo, mother!' I should say, just as if I'd come home from school, and slip behind her chair and give her a kiss before the old lady knew where she was.

Lord, how my heart did beat as I softly opened the door! This was what I saw—the decanters were there all right, and the dessert, and the smell of dinner and wine, just as of old, but there was no mother sitting there.

Carry in black on one side of the fire; Balker in black on the other; little Timmings, the lawyer, in the middle, smacking his lips over a glass of port.

My voice died away in my throat. I shut-to the door gently and went off into the kitchen. There was Patty, mother's old servant, putting away the silver. She was in black too, and crying over the things. She gave such a scream when she saw me. I was a roughlooking chap, bear in mind, and she didn't know me at the moment.

'I'm Dick,' I said, 'Patty. Where's mother?'

'O,' she cried, putting her hands on my shoulder, and looking into my face to make sure I was speaking truth; 'O dear, Master Dick, why didn't you come home before?'

So it was; mother had been dead and buried a fortnight ago.

Balker had smoothed her over long before her death, and he and

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Carry between them had made it right about the property. I don't know what lies Balker had told about me, but I saw her will afterwards in Doctors' Commons for a shilling, and there was nothing for me except a hundred pounds. And I didn't even get that, for they made out that I had been advanced the money beforehand—that hundred pounds mother sent me, you remember—and I knew it was no good fighting Balker about it, me that hadn't a halfpenny.

All the knocking about hadn't knocked the pride out of me. Before I'd be beholden to Carry or Balker for a penny I'd starve; and I came pretty near starving too. I walked up to London hungry and footsore. I slept under trees in the park, and earned a few shillings at the Docks, just enough to keep body and soul together, till one day I had carried a ship captain's bag from Victoria Docks to Charing-cross for a shilling, and I stood at the corner by St. Martin's church, looking at the fountains playing and the big lions, and wishing one of them was alive and would make an end of me, when a yellow 'bus drove up, and a chap sings out:

'Hallo, Dick!' It was the chum I'd come home with who was sitting up there driving. 'Jump up,' he said; and I got upon the box-seat; and we had a long talk, and finding I was doing no good, he offered to get me a job to look after the horses of the 'bus.

But he did better than that for me; for, seeing that I had got some education about me, the manager made a conductor of me.

It wasn't that gay agreeable job I once thought it. To be sure the line I was in wasn't one that admits of much elocution. "Toria, 'toria,' and 'Tannia,' meaning Victoria Station and the Britannia Tavern, you can't make much of a patter of. And as for jokes, why, ever since they introduced those 'way-bills,' as they call them, that you stick upon the doors and mark the fares on, you've got your pencil in your mouth all day long, and can't make 'em.

Still I was pleased enough at my job, and it so happened that one day I was waiting my turn in the bar of the Mother Shipton, and took up the Daily Telegraph, and casting my eyes over the deaths, I saw announced Mr. Balker's—on the very day too that I had got my situation. There's no use mincing the matter, I was downright glad. 'That man,' I said to myself, 'didn't enjoy his ill-gotten plunder very long; and what's more, I believe that he was my evil spirit, and that now he's gone I shall make a start in the world.' But I hadn't reckoned upon his having a son.

I had been at my new work for about a fortnight when one evening, on our downward journey, after we had passed the Redcap, I began to collect the fares. There were only three passengers in the 'bus. One of them was a pretty fresh-looking country girl, who, as soon as I called out 'Fares, please,' began to search her pockets. Then she flushed up quite crimson all of a sudden. 'Dear me,' she cried, 'I've lost my purse!' Well, there was a man sitting opposite her

very respectably dressed, with a sallow waxy face and little pig's eyes, and he looked at her quite angrily. 'Lost your purse?' says he. 'You mean you've left it at home on the drawing-room chimneypiece,' he said, with a sneer. Well, I could see the poor girl was almost in tears about it, so I spoke to her and told her that as far as the loss of the purse went it was a bad job for her, but that she needn't be troubled about not paying the fare, because she could let me have it next time she saw me. With that she began to tell me that there was one pound fifteen shillings in the purse, and that she was going to a place as nursemaid at Haverstock-hill, and that the purse contained all the money she was worth. She had been standing waiting for the 'bus some time at Charing-cross, and supposed somebody had taken it out of her pocket.

I was very sorry for her, and said what I could to comfort her, and when we came to the Shipton I showed her the way to the place she was going to—17 Judkin-place. I noticed that the sallow-faced man started when she told me the address, and seemed to look rather hard at her, and looked hard at me too when she asked me who she should inquire for to pay the money back, and I told her my real name, Dick Maylam.

I began now to take notice of the regular customers, and found that the sallow-faced man travelled by us pretty regularly. A spiteful chap he was too. He'd hit wildly out with his umbrella-handle when he wanted to get out, as if conductors had no feelings in their elbow-joints. He always offered me twopence too for a threepenny fare, on the chance that I'd take it by mistake.

One night, when I went to the office on my last journey, the book-keeper said to me, 'Maylam, you're ninepence short in your cash to-day.' 'I think not,' I said; for I was always very careful of the cash, and to keep the way-bills right, and I was so 'cute that I always put a private mark against the last fare on each line, so that nobody should stick down any figures after me.

Such of you as travel in your own carriages and don't use the omnibuses mayn't know what these way-bills are. They are a Manchester invention, I believe, and are slips of thin paper ruled with cross lines, twelve spaces in a row, and as many rows as there are different fares. Mine had three rows for twopenny, threepenny, and fourpenny fares. You put them in a little frame that opens with a hinge and is screwed on to the door of the 'bus, and every fare you draw you mark on the bill.

Well, as soon as the book-keeper told me I was short in my cash I said, 'Well, let us look at the way-bills,' feeling sure he'd either made a mistake or wanted to plunder me; but I reckoned them all up carefully and found that the man was right. I must have lost the money. I made it up out of my own pocket, and resolved to be more careful another time. But next day it was the

same ninepence short again. Then for two days I was right; after that another ninepence to the bad.

'You must be careful, Maylam,' said the man, 'and don't let it happen again; for if it does I shall report you as always being short.'

But it did happen again and again, sometimes sixpence, sometimes ninepence, sometimes a shilling, and I couldn't find out how it went. I was well-nigh driven mad by it, for I knew I should lose my place if it happened much oftener, and brood over it as I might I could fathom it in no way. I was always particular in giving change, and nobody could get at my money, which I kept in the leather wallet provided by the company.

At last word came down one day that I was to have the sack at the week end, and then I can tell you I felt downright bad. There wasn't much chance of my getting another place, as private owners are few, and besides the company most likely would refuse to give me a character. I didn't know what to turn to, and couldn't see anything before me but starvation. Those sort of feelings don't help a man to get through his work smartly, and I got worse and worse muddled as the day went on. People abused me for not setting them down where they told me, and altogether I was well-nigh distracted.

It was a damp dismal afternoon, and when we stopped at the corner of Oxford-street and Tottenham-court-road there was a great rush of people to get into the omnibus. Amongst them was a widow lady in deep black, and with her was our sallow-faced friend. It was dusk and I couldn't see the faces inside, but as I lighted my lamp and the gleam shone into the 'bus, I started back and turned my head away from the door. The widow lady was my sister Carry. After that first touch of shame, however, I didn't care any more. You get hardened to such things when you come to downright want. I took no more notice of her, and whether she'd recognised me I did She did sure enough when she got out at the Shipton; she in her black silk and handsome crapes, all rustling and crackling, with a sealskin purse in her hand almost bursting out with gold and bank-notes, and me with my tattered greasy coat, patched trousers, and broken boots. She flushed up to her eyes, and I think she'd have spoken to me, but I turned my back upon her, and the sallow man hurried her away.

As my old chum got off the box I told him about my getting the sack, and he said it was a bad job, but there was no use fretting, and he proposed to go into the bar and have a drink. As we were standing there taking our whisky a young woman popped her head in quite shamefaced. 'Can you tell me,' she said, 'whether a Mr. Maylam, a 'bus conductor, comes here?' 'I'm he, miss,' I said; and then I recollected that she was the girl who had lost her purse.

'O, I've brought you the money for the fare,' she said, 'Mr. Maylam, and if you wouldn't mind accepting a shilling—' 'O, no, thank you, miss,' I said. And then we began talking; but she said that she couldn't stop, because her mistress didn't know she had run out. 'And what do you think?' she said. 'That was my new master who came up in the 'bus with me, that sodden-complexioned gent!' 'And what's his name?' I asked. 'Why, Balker,' she said. Then I saw who he must be. He must be Balker's eldest son by his first wife, the one I had thrashed so badly a good many years ago.

Well, I thought it all over and over again that night as I lay awake, and I couldn't help fancying that these Balkers, who had been the ruin of me all along, had some hand in this last misfortune. They hated me badly enough to do anything to bring me to destruction, although one would have thought being an omnibus conductor was low enough for them. Then I seemed to recollect that every time I had been short of cash young Balker had taken the journey with me. Still I didn't see how he could have robbed me, and even if he had it would never be found out now. I was done for, and that was an end of it.

Next day Balker travelled back with us, getting in at Oxfordstreet. It was early, about four o'clock in the afternoon, before the regular stream of business men set in; consequently, after we passed the Redcap, there was no one else inside. It had often happened so before. He always came home early, not having much to do, I daresay, living comfortable, no doubt, on my mother's money.

Well, we crossed the canal bridge and passed under the railway arch, and just beyond we pulled up of course to change horses. I always made a practice of giving a helping-hand during this operation, and I was going to jump off my perch as usual to go and help, when I saw a sort of wicked sparkle in Mr. Balker's eye that put me on my guard.

'Jack,' I whispered to the driver, running to the front, 'just look over the side and see what the man inside is doing.'

Well, Jack looked over for a second, and then he jumped off his perch and ran behind. I ran too, and we got there just in time to see our sodden-looking friend with a pencil in his hand, jotting down a few extra figures on the way-bill.

Well, he went home to his friends afterwards, looking a deal more disreputable than me, and I don't think he'll very soon forget his trip that day. He had to give me fifty pounds too to hush the matter up, and that will pay my passage over to Melbourne, and leave me with a few pounds in pocket. So I fancy, although the company are quite willing to keep me on, that you won't hear any more from me as an ill-conducted conductor.

P.S. I think it highly probable that nice fresh-looking young woman will join the expedition.

## JONAS FISHER

It has transpired that the singularly powerful, deeply pathetic, and sternly realistic poem, which a weekly journal pronounced on its appearance to be the work of either 'Robert Buchanan aut Diabolus,' proceeds from the pen of a nobleman who, as well known for his culture and literary ability as for his exploits as a sportsman in the wild regions of the Far West, has not hitherto, so far as we are aware, paid the Muses any conspicuous court. Lord Southesk, who, since its first appearance, stands confessed as the author of Jonas Fisher, has produced a work to which he may well be proud to attach his name. It is indeed an open question whether the composition should, taken as a whole, be called a poem. passages in it which, as we shall have no difficulty in pointing out, rise to a lofty standard of poetic excellence, so far as thought, feeling, eloquence, and diction are concerned. The key in which the production is pitched is as elevated as the subject-matter will allow. Yet Lord Southesk, we are certain, would be the first to admit that his work, so far as its metrical beauties are concerned, no more aspires to a higher character than doggrel than the Bab Ballads of which Jonas Fisher will frequently remind the reader—or John Gilpin's Ride. Lord Southesk has selected an easy rhyme, of which he possesses a perfect mastery, because his thoughts naturally adapted themselves to that instrument of expression, and because rhyme is better calculated than prose to fix in the mind the lessons and truths which, with thrilling effect, he conveys. There is not a page in the book that fails to contain a stanza very often a whole succession of stanzas—which rings with an echo -sometimes terrible, sometimes plaintive and pathetic, harsh and strong often, weak or maudlin never-that will pierce the heart of humanity to its inmost depth. In no other way could Lord Southesk have succeeded so admirably in compelling attention to the problems that he raises. In no other way could he have demanded a hearing with equal cogency. He has done a good work, quite independently of the literary features of the poem 'in brown and white;' for he has written what will make men meditate and think, will stir in them an interest that in this age, incrusted as it is with the veneer of social and plutocratic polish, has perhaps slumbered too long; and will bring home to them the fact how very little knowledge after all they have of the lives, the sorrows, the wants, and the aspirations of the struggling millions around them.

Jonas Fisher is a book whose fame and usefulness will grow; a book which those who read at all will read through; which those who read once will read again; and which every one who has read and well considered its contents will earnestly urge his friends and neighbours attentively to study.

Perhaps the volume with which Jonas Fisher most naturally suggests comparison is Mrs. Linton's Joshua Davidson. little in common, it may be thought, between the Christian Communist and the ex-shopman, who has embraced the vocation of Scripture reader and itinerant preacher. But both Joshua Davidson and Jonas Fisher are penetrated with the same intense appreciation of the grinding misery of that existence which falls to the lot of the inhabitants of the sickening slums, the crowded courts, and the pestiferous alleys of London. In both there is the same courageous application of doctrines and teachings, which come to us with a more than human sanction, to the meanest and the smallest objects around us. In both there is the same ever-recurring insistence—sometimes subtly insinuated, at other times loudly proclaimed—on the elasticity of Christianity as a religious system; and on its adequacy, if interpreted aright, to yield relief to all men and women, whatever their needs, however low and despised their condition. But Mr. Grace-'Augustus Grace, Esquire,' as he is called-is no friend to priests; and there is the ring of a sturdy Protestantism in the book which might satisfy Mr. Newdegate, and half reassure even Mr. Whalley. 'This story,' runs the first line on the opening page of Jonas Fisher, 'is not meant for girls;' but as the author proceeds to assure us, there is nothing in it which, if they do read it, will do them harm. Jonas Fisher writes in his own person; but Jonas is but a poor unlettered preacher:

'And even though the superfine

My humble talk should not admire,

They well may value every word

Dropp'd by Augustus Grace, Esquire—

The kindest and the best of men—
That's my opinion, people prone
To rail at the unorthodox,
Of course are welcome to their own.'

Of Mr. Grace, his character and his person, we shall have more to say presently. Let us now speak of his laureate, Jonas Fisher, erewhile a godless shopboy, who, after business hours, took a delight, with other pagano-Christian youths, in smoking bad cigars, in offering unsolicited attentions to modest girls, and in generally leading 'a jolly life.' Jonas has experienced the blessing of spiritual regeneration, and now occupies all his spare time in mission work, prayer-meetings, and in visitation of the sick and suffering poor. At the prayer-meetings he listens to the discourses

of a Christian Irishman. 'His name is Mr. Sullivan.' In his works of charity he is largely assisted by Mr. Grace, a philanthropist of aristocratic birth, of eccentric ways, of strong ideas, of an intense belief in the superiority of the glad tidings of Christianity over the doctrines and the creed of those whose professional calling it is to convey the message. We are first introduced to Mr. Grace in this wise: Jonas has, somewhat rashly, promised a dying pauper that he shall be buried with decent burial. But decent burial, he finds, or rather reflects, would cost four pounds. How is the money to be raised? At the worst, he observes, his 'watch and chain would perfectly have met the case;' but he at once dismisses all idea of such an extreme measure from his mind, and counts confidently on Mr. Grace:

'Who's he? That would be hard to tell:
A gentleman of means, I know,
And one of station too, I think,
Though carefully avoiding show.'

Mr. Grace is, in fact, a good deal of a mystery to Jonas Fisher. He is an unpretending gentleman—a gentleman he is beyond doubt—and might seem nothing to the common mind. But Jonas knows from experience that 'a very common-looking man may prove a most uncommon friend.' His temperament was, so far as its outward moods were concerned, unstable and capricious:

'Sometimes his eye beam'd soft with joy, His thoughts were all from realms above, And bloom'd in words like heavenly flowers Rich with the fragrancy of love.

Sometimes, in Mr. Grace's looks,
A different story one might read,—
Sad eyes, bent brows, and sallow cheeks,
As if his food had disagreed.

And on such days no doubt it had;
For indigestion's a disease
Which, with east winds especially,
Will shake the firmest Christian's peace.'

The only one unchangeable quality in Mr. Grace is his 'readiness to give.' It will be at once correctly apprehended that Augustus Grace, Esquire, is designed as the artistic foil of Jonas Fisher, and Lord Southesk has contrasted with great skill and strength the narrow, pious, timid, yet well-meaning Puritan, who believes, it is true, in the necessity of Christian labours, but believes also implicitly in the formal teachings of his minister, with the man who boldly avows,

'But never will my soul accept
The bondage of your systems prim:
Whate'er each man can do the best,
That is religious work for him.'

Yet it is not to be supposed that the author of this poem in brown and white has written with any occult intention or latent wish to cast ridicule and contempt on the excellent Dissenter whose heart is in his chapel. On the contrary, Jonas is a thoroughly fine manly character. It would rather seem to be Lord Southesk's wish to show, by placing Jonas in juxtaposition with Mr. Grace, how, under circumstances of education, of station, of religious conviction the most widely different, the same virtues may be nurtured, may bear blossom and fruit. This idea is further elaborated in the two following stanzas, which are placed in the mouth of Mr. Grace:

'You, Jonas, have to trade and preach; Some have a scholar's work to do, Or courtier's, soldier's, artist's work; And God will bless both them and you.

Then bless we Him who blesses them—
Who blesses earnest workers all.
Let no one think that God requires
Each man to be a John or Paul.

Surely the Christianity of these sentiments is unimpeachably orthodox, and is capable of the clearest demonstration from scriptural texts. Before we accompany Jonas and Mr. Grace in any of their philanthropic quests, or examine further into the theological philosophy of the latter, we may realise, with the help of Lord Southesk, their personality more distinctly yet. The sketch is an amusing one, full of graphic touches, and penetrated by a simple yet subtle humour, in which our poet excels:

'I sometimes wonder what folk think Of me and worthy Mr. Grace, When side by side we stump along, So different in form and face;

So different in dress besides,

For though his clothes are seldom new,
They somehow make mine sing quite small,
Though black and fresh, and shiny too.

His garments hang, or wrap him round Quite kindly, be they thin or thick; Mine stand like wooden things aloof, Or else like sticking-plaster stick.

His face is wan, his eyes are sad,
With passing gleams of flery pride—
Pride tamed by illness,—he is like
A lion with a sick inside.

Not for a moment can I think
That passers-by desire to scan
My looks like those of Mr. Grace,
Or take me for the better man.

Now what may be the cause of this
(For so it is beyond a doubt)?

I never cared to ask his help
To twist the matter's meaning out.'

Jonas wants to know how it is that the poor among whom they each of them visit intuitively recognise Mr. Grace's superiority? If it is urged that Mr. Grace is a gentleman, Jonas argues that he himself is of 'a decent stock,' that his folk have farmed their own farm for two hundred years, have lived upon the best food, and never been in want; that his blood is stuffed as thick as his patrician friend's 'with beef and beer and best white bread;' and that the test of 'manners,' the 'habit of society,' can scarcely apply in a mere matter of 'walking down a street.'

'But yet I somehow always find
That all poor people have the plan
At once to treat me as their mate,
But Mr. Grace as gentleman.'

What is the secret of it? The answer would satisfy Mr. Disraeli: it is race—race which is the key of history. Our British population, argues Jonas, springs from tribes of various looks. He then takes a mental survey of the different types, which he has seen in picture-books, and arrives at the conclusion that Mr. Grace is a born master of his species, because he belongs to the Scandinavian breed, and that he himself is a born inferior, as being a Basque:

'Now what occurs to me is this,—
That many more than one can know
Have Basquish blood within their veins;
A mixture which is apt to show

In small-boned insignificance:

Henceforth if any one should ask,
Why are you held so cheap? I'll say,
"I'm nothing but a plaguy Basque."

But quite a different ancestry
Belongs, I think, to Mr. Grace:
I mark'd his features in the sketch
Of the old Scandinavian face.'

Having thus introduced the reader to these two latter-day evangelists, each in a noble spirit of self-sacrifice and philanthropy struggling to do his duty by his Creator and his fellow-creatures, we will accompany the pair—or sometimes Jonas singly—on their daily rounds. But let no one prepare to set forth in these expeditions who has not a strong stomach as well as a stout heart, who is not equal to encountering hideous sights, sounds, and smells, who cannot gaze upon squalor, filth, and brutality, and who is likely to turn faint at the sight of men and women living and behaving infinitely-worse than the beasts that perish. Lord Southesk is no ideal obscurantist, no mere rose-water philanthropist. He turns the

light of his tragic and heart-moving description full upon the most appalling aspects of metropolitan existence; he condenses into his verses sketches of those depths of sin and woe, invisible to the respectable world, which, in their true colours and naked hideousness, have only yet been found in the reports and diaries of East-end clergymen. He lays bare each festering sore; he reveals to us a hidden panorama of iniquity, destitution, and a worse than heathenish darkness, terrible, and it may well be sickening, to contemplate. One of the first places to which we are taken is a common lodginghouse of the vilest type, depicted with touches whose breadth and power are veritably Hogarthian. Up a 'gloomy corkscrew stair' we go, compelled to 'smell' rather than feel the way. There are not less than a hundred inhabitants of the wretched dwelling, half 'thieves and prostitutes, and worse.' Yet Jonas Fisher fears nothing; and proceeds like an angler to dip his bait in the darkest pool. First, he comes to a family of herring-dealers; next to a mother and daughter, each leading an infamous life; and then he passes on to other groups, all of whom exist in an atmosphere of moral impurity not less pestilential than that of their spiritual infirmity. There is real beauty in the reflections which these hideous scenes raise in the heart of Jonas Fisher, and there is much that may set us thinking in the dialogue which follows, between Jonas and Mr. Grace:

'Said Mr. Grace on this—"The texts
In Scripture, if one calculate,
'Gainst want of purity, are less
In length and strength than those 'gainst hate." '

This is the thesis of the discussion. The arguments cannot be followed here; the reader must master them for himself. Suffice it to say that the point on which the controversy turns is the old familiar riddle: how a Being infinitely powerful and infinitely good can sanction such innumerable manifestations of misery in His sight. And this is the riddle which suffuses the whole life of Mr. Grace with an ever-present anguish, the refrain which perpetually suggests itself to him in notes of agony and despair; the question which he cannot answer, and his impotence to deal with which finally brings him to something very like madness. On the other hand the simpler Jonas is spared these self-torturing queries. He admits:

'For all around us we behold

Much less of love than pain and death.

To grasp the thought that "God is love"

Requires a mighty gift of faith.'

But Jonas is not a philosopher; and when Mr. Grace asks him some question which might well try his faith, the honest fellow replies with some biblical quotation or some aphorism of orthodox religion.

In the second part of the poem we still find ourselves among the Irish poor:

'In houses where the Irish live, They congregate in numbers dense; Far more than other sorts of folk They have an instinct, or a sense,

To crowd in dens where scarce a whiff Of foreign air can interfere, With that delight which patriots find In breathing native atmosphere.'

The Irish are naturally for the most part Catholics, and Lord Southesk, in his remarks on the religion of Rome, appears as more of the exclusively controversial theologian than in any other portion of his work. So bitter is Augustus Grace, Esq., in his denunciations of the Vatican and all its associations that Jonas is somewhat shocked, and expostulates with his patron in words, which we are satisfied Lord Southesk must have smiled when he wrote, and at which we therefore may be excused for smiling as we read them:

"It grieves me, Mr. Grace," said I,
"To hear such sentiments proceed
From one so generally esteem'd—
It grieves me very much indeed."

It is not only the vehement emphasis of Mr. Grace's criticisms which shocks Jonas, but the spiritual self-confidence which he thinks they argue; and on the principle that pride goeth before a fall, Jonas is troubled with qualms lest he should witness the apostasy of his friend. On the whole, however, it may be assumed, from the tenor of Mr. Grace's subsequent remarks, that Jonas is finally convinced of the baselessness of his fears on this score.

We are next taken to the 'darkest, dirtiest Irish den' on the whole of Jonas's mission round. There is one house here which Jonas confesses he did not like to visit late—a house in which, till recently, two resurrectionists lived, who pursued their trade of strangling boys and afterwards selling their bodies. Still he makes up his mind to enter it, and goes up-stairs—

'Such narrow stairs with twists and turns, Such long dark winding passages,— Such sudden howls from dreadful holes, That made one's very life-blood freeze!'

He knocks at a door, and hears a cheerful voice bid him come in:

With neither table, bed, nor chair;
Upon the rotten floor was flung
A heap of rags, and in the midst
A poor eld tailor sat and sung,

And snipp'd and patch'd and stitch'd away, So happy in his little shop; And quantities of big brown fleas Danced round him with their hop, hop, hop.'

These same little insects sadly troubled poor Jonas when he first went on mission work; but Mr. Grace has given him a kind of pepper, made from herbs, which he sprinkles on his clothes, and which, in his own vigorous vernacular, 'plays old Herod with the fleas.' Presently he asks the tailor what sort of neighbours he has —whether they are 'a decent sort of lot;' to which question there comes reply as follows:

'Dacent! Is't decency ye mane?
The dogs are decent bastes by those.'

Notwithstanding the warning which Jonas receives, that he has a fair chance of being robbed, or even killed outright, he determines to go among the 'rough customers' in the next room. A knot of savage-looking roughs are crouched round a fire, smoking short clay pipes, none of whom returns a word of acknowledgment to poor Jonas's civil, 'How d'ye do?' In the corner there cowers a woman, as if some sorrow of her own

'Fill'd her whole heart, and kept her there, As solitary in her woe As if upon a mountain top Amidst a wilderness of snow.'

Jonas speaks to her. She

' Made no reply, but turn'd her gaze
Towards a far corner, where a ray
Fell from a skylight through the gloom
Upon a table: there there lay

A small dead babe, its little face
White as pure wax,—with all around
So foul, its fairness seem'd to me
Like a laid lily on the ground.

Its eyes were closed; not as in sleep, But in a glad angelic rest; Coarse linen wrapt its body close, A cup of salt was on its breast.

Its pretty lips were just apart,
As though they sought the bosom rife—
Sweet babe! no sucker now of milk,
But sucker of the Tree of Life.

And there its haggard mother crouch'd
With swollen breast, and seem'd to bear
Unutterable pangs of soul,
Half deadly rage, and half despair.

A tigress near her murder'd cub
Might look so—ah! the beast, with moans,
Would gape her yellow throat, and howl
Her fury to the desert stones—

This was a woman. She kept still,
And nature sent no genial flood
Of tears, nor voice to ease her grief:
She silent crouch'd, and dream'd of blood.'

Shortly after this Jonas meets Mr. Grace, and a long conversation between them—the principal speaker being Mr. Grace himself—ensues. The beauty of the dead, the relation of body to soul, the absurdities of modern burial customs, the eternity of punishment, the difference between ancients and moderns, between the old and new schools of poetry, the vices and virtues of English society, the state of the stage, woman's rights—these are only a few of the topics discussed. Of these subjects the most interesting, perhaps, is that which Mr. Grace starts in the following verse; and no one will read it without perceiving that if Lord Southesk can write doggrel he can also write true and powerful poetry:

'More quick, more slow, the impress strikes,
As changes quick or slow take place—
Those who would read a nation's past
May read it in a nation's face.'

In support of this view Mr. Grace mentions the 'first Tudor king,' a type of countenance entirely unlike the modern—a grave, calm, firm-fleshed oval face, with strong unwavering lines and curves. The second type he selects is that of the age of Shakespeare:

'Ah, then behold the perfect type,
Where flesh and soul and spirit blend
In measure which the most allows
That glory should in all transcend:

Long-visaged, strong-chinn'd, high of nose, Large-eyed, with gaze stern, sweet, sublime; Well-bearded, grand of chest and arm; Brow'd as if brain to heaven would climb.'

Thirdly, we come to the Cavalier and Puritan, in the former of whom Mr. Grace detects the 'greyhound slim' and in the latter 'the mastiff stout'—in one 'a selfish vanity,' in the other a 'dry pedantic pride.' After this Mr. Grace thinks that the types of the human face deteriorated—the Cavalier becoming a strumous fool with goggled eyes, beetling brow, fat pink lips; the Puritan presenting a huge, rough, jowly face, topped by a cranium, low and broad. Bad as this was, it would have become worse unless the 'fierce French Revolution' had been sent to clear the atmosphere:

'Then follow'd war and furious change, The nations to their centres shook!;— Behold the features of mankind Once more a faithful history-book.'

Thus we are gradually brought down to the present time, when we may mark a new element in the face:

'An influence on the nerves, display'd In the inquiring restless glance And complex feature-lines, that mark The nineteenth-century countenance.'

Mr. Grace, our readers will have perceived long ere this, is not a gentleman who cares to measure his phrases when his convictions are concerned. We will pass on to a few more of his judgments on contemporary matters. As regards poetry, he hates mock-modesty; but he hates prurience more. When men like Byron sing too free, he does not shudder over-much, however little he may approve. But, he adds,

'what my very soul abhors,
What almost turns my blood to bile,
Is, when some prurient paganist
Stands up, and warbles with a smile

A sick, putrescent, dulcet lay,—
Like sugar'd sauce with meat too high,—
To hymn or hint the sensuous charms
Of morbid immorality.

Or when some dog-brow'd neophyte Informs the world in terms precise, That, "simple as he stands," he is Past-master in Parisian vice,'

After this Mr. Grace launches out in impassioned and not uneloquent philippics against the corruption, the effeminacy, the Pharisaism of the present age. The English, he seems to say, amplifying Mr. Disraeli's epigram, are a people who have stopped short at comfort, and imagine it civilisation. We are bidden to apply to ourselves the moral of the fall of the tower of Siloam. Because a terrible disaster came five years ago upon France, that does not prove that England is superior to France in all matters appertaining to ethics of practical life. According to Lord Southesk, our stage is immoral and weak, so are our pictures and is the tone of society. And there is much, Mr. Grace reminds us, that we could borrow from our continental neighbours; for instance:

'O that dull London could but see, What every German city sees, Gay well-bench'd gardens everywhere, With tables under spreading trees;

And happy people group'd about,
With wine and coffee, pipes and beer,—
Men, women, children, poor and rich,
All courteous mirth and quiet cheer.

Yet no republicans are these,

No levellers full of rage and hate,
Each class maintains its rightful place
As God and law have fix'd its state.

The sombreness and the misery of so vast an area of English life, the absolute absence of any illuminating ray of happiness or innocent mirth, the gloomy colour in which even the tidings of great joy are proclaimed to English men and women—these may be said to be the central ideas of Mr. Grace. 'How strange,' he exclaims.

'when people have the choice
'Twixt savage gloom and tender light,
To find them doating on the dark,
As if what's horrid must be right.'

Yet there was nothing, he argues, to encourage this notion in the early dawn of Christianity:

'Yet what a beauteous babe it was, Ere brutes and pedants learn'd to mar Its loveliness, to quench the sheen Of Bethlehem's softly beaming star!

Yea, deem that holy tale but myth, Reject the angel's song with scorn, Reject three books called Gospels,—then Complacent hug the dogmas born

From Alexandria's teeming womb,
With fleroe old Israel for their sire;
Reject simplicity, peace, love,
Accept complexity, blood, fire.'

The ghastly incident with the narration of which this poem concludes is the last stroke which crushes the spirit of Mr. Grace. He bids his humble friend good-bye, and disappears.

We have thus endeavoured to analyse the motives and explain the character of what—whether it is to be called, as a whole, poetry or not—is still a very remarkable work. Objections might be urged to the fact that Lord Southesk has published his thoughts on men and things to the world in the shape in which he has done, and not in plain prose. We think, however, that these objections are sufficiently answered by the statement that the form of composition which he has selected is that which is peculiarly adapted to fix in the minds of readers the truths and thoughts that he has to tell us. Jonas Fisher is a work which will bear careful reading and much meditation. That it has poetry in it the extracts quoted by us will have made clear; and that Lord Southesk should have preferred, as it is, to appear before us as a philanthropist and as a social philosopher than as a mere poet, does equal credit to his head and to his heart.



M. Fitzgerald, del.

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# 'TWIXT GREEN AND RED

#### VIII.

As soon as Mrs. Podmore made good her escape from Lisson-grove, she walked as quick as she could towards St. John's Wood; not so fast, however, as to prevent her catching sight of a certain young lady who had just alit from an omnibus at the corner of Praedstreet. 'Poddy' was bent on communicating with her patroness. Her terms were 'cash.' She had worked hard that night for Madge, and she intended her to know it; and what was more, to make some fitting acknowledgment. So on she went, 'neath the azure sky, the throbbing stars, those 'everlasting blossoms of heaven,' as St. Basil calls the 'forget-me-nots of the angels.' Did Longfellow ever read the Homilies on the Hexemeron, I wonder?

Arrived at Laurestinus Lodge, the door was opened by a smart maid-servant, a maid-servant with suspiciously brilliant eyes and cheeks. 'Miss Templeton was gone to the theayter, but would be 'ome before long. Would Mrs. Podmore wait?' Mrs. Podmore would; and was forthwith ushered into the back dining-room—a snug little apartment, apparently consecrated to nicotian rites. The door being shut and the gas turned up, to gossip a little about this, that, and the other seemed the most natural thing in the world.

'She came 'ome in a tearin' rage to-day,' said Susan; 'and Sir 'Enry 'e come with 'er. I knew directly somethink 'ad gone wrong when I seed 'im instead of the Capting—not that 'e troubles much; and that's what's so tryin'. Would you believe it? This evenin', when I was a-dressin' of 'er, she flew at me, and said that I painted my eyebrows, and got myself hup quite disgustin'. "Not with your cosmetics, though," says I, and then and there gave warnin'; which I mean to go too,' with decision.

'Is Sir 'Enry likely, think you?' inquired Mrs. Podmore perspicuously.

Susan was not sure. P'raps! Not that it signified a straw to 'er, for she wouldn't stay. No, not if every livin' soul in the 'ouse crawled from there to Jerusalem on their bended knees to beg her to. Not she indeed! She knew what was due to herself a little better than that, she thanked goodness.

A thundering knock here cut short these confidences. Madge had got back; she had, moreover, got some friends with her, friends who would stay to supper.

On being told that Mrs. Podmore was waiting, in she swept, looking really splendid in her lace and silk and jewels. The colloquy was brief, but to the point.

'Have you done anything?'

'Hall as I could.'

'Will he marry her?'

'Not if 'e hisn't mad.'

'You are certain?'

'As certain as that my name's what it is.'

Miss Templeton smiled.

'There,' said she, 'that will pay your omnibus.'

Two sovereigns!

'Humph!' grunted Mrs. Podmore, 'none too much neither.'

### IX.

Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter.

Whilst Mrs. Podmore was engaged in the highly agreeable task of reinvigorating exhausted nature, the cumbrous vehicle in which Miss Maitland had seated herself on parting from John Miller was slowly bumping and jolting itself towards the Edgware-road.

Once fairly started on her journey, Clemmie's courage began to flag, and pardonably. To venture alone at night into any one of the low neighbourhoods of this our far-famed metropolis requires, if you are a woman, no inconsiderable amount of fortitude. That she stood in danger of losing her one chance of happiness, all told, never crossed her mind.

Owing to frequent delays, and the conductor's tendency to refresh his jaded intellect with the latest news and chaff going at the various street-corners, Clemmie, as we have already seen, arrived at the 'bus station opposite Praed-street just as Mrs. Podmore scuttled off Kilburnwards.

Paying her fare with tremulous haste, and threading her way through the crowd of roughs on the pavement, she rapidly found herself in the street we wot of.

How the slatternly women stared and laughed as they watched her run up the steps and knock at the door, which was opened presently by a child! Not that she took much heed, for her cheeks were about as hot as they well could be before she turned the corner, and every thought in her head centred on the one great question—how bribe, cajole, persuade 'Hugh' to give up that shawl?

So! He slept—slept, his arms folded, his chin on his breast, the heavy, stertorous, brutish sleep of the gorged. For that broad hint notwithstanding, Hugh, I must tell you, never for a moment imagined it possible the girl would really come. Well enough as

an excuse; but, soberly speaking, fudge. Well, there she stood, eyeing him. What a sight he was! what a dog-hole this den of his! He had been feasting too—playing host. Clemmie smiled, a trifle bitterly. Rather hard that. Towards whom, she wondered, had his magnanimity displayed itself? Who had helped dissipate her little all? Well, what did it matter? It was gone. With a shudder the girl woke, addressed herself to the business in hand; truly a most hateful and vile business—a business to make one wince.

Stepping forward, she peered round. Perhaps she might light on the shawl unseen. Vain hope. A husky gurgle. The man straightened himself up.

'Halloa!' exclaimed he, eyeing her with dull wonder. 'What

the — brings you here?'

But she paid no heed. She had espied something bright, something like gold-thread down in that corner there, on the floor.

'Ah,' said Mr. Maitland, 'I know what you're up to. Now you drop that,' struggling to his feet with a tipsy lurch, 'or it'll be the worse for you.'

'But it isn't mine,' cried the poor soul.

'The devil it isn't!' Between ourselves this was a 'stumper.' A pause.

'O Hugh,' said the girl at length, 'do let me have it—do! You cannot think what trouble I shall get into!'

Hugh glowered, his hands in his pockets.

'Humph!' growled he. 'Well, I don't know that the confounded thing's much use to me. Why didn't you say so, though, curse you!'

'Say!' she echoed, 'say! Could I imagine that-

'O, stow that. You're no saint,' with a laugh—a bitter, low, mocking laugh.

'What do you mean?'

'What I do mean. You don't gammon me; I know you.'

A sigh.

She would not answer him. Where was the good? Let him say just what he pleased. Perhaps when he had done—quite, quite, quite done—he would give way.

Meekly she stood, white and meek, bearing the brunt.

Mr. Maitland's thoughts meanwhile seemed tinged with gloom. He frowned; he shot out his under-lip; he gave utterance to sundry contemptuous snorts.

Clemmie eyed him fearfully. What did he meditate? Was he

turning over in his mind how she might best be killed?

'Look here,' said he at length; and she actually started, so scared was she; 'you give me ten pounds, and I'll hook it—I'll bunk.'

Clemmie stared.

- 'Well,' said he, 'what's there to gape at? Give me ten pounds, I say, and I'll go. That's plain enough.'
  - 'But are you in earnest?'
- 'Most certainly I am. I love the fields, the babbling brooks—babbling brooks p't'cklrrrly,' and a hiccup.

Clemmie mustered all her strength.

- 'You shall have it,' she said; 'you shall have it.'
- O happy day! O joyful words!
- 'When?'
- 'When do you want to start?'
- 'Soon's possible.'
- 'Will to-morrow do?'
- 'To-morrow?' Mr. Maitland seemed to reflect. 'Yes, to-morrow'll do. I sha'n't want to start before to-morrow.'

Clemmie frowned. What an odd way to talk! Was he sufficiently sober to know what he was about? A somewhat portentous question, under the circumstances. However, she must do her best.

- 'Well,' said she, 'then that is settled. And now may I have the shawl?'
  - 'Yes!' and an oath.

But now I must for a brief space—in the interest of lucidity—quit these two, and again hark back a little, which erratic proceeding on my part will doubtless betray how very inexperienced, and indeed I may say unskilled, a story-teller I am, a fact open to regret on more scores than one.

On leaving the lodge, having 'ad jest a mouthful to keep one goin',' good Mrs. Podmore made straight for the Metropolitan station, Edgware-road. Mrs. Podmore meant to go home by rail. Mrs. Podmore was tired; and them 'blessed hinfants must be a-screechin' their werry hinsides hout.'

Now the worthy Poddy was one of those happily-constituted mortals who never flag. Human nature too afforded her a rich harvest—amusement combined with instruction and sense with wit. Keeping her eyes open and glancing keenly right and left, on scuttled Mrs. Poddy until she came to the last turning, the turning which, thank goodness, led to her journey's end, when whom should she espy—dear clever old creature—sauntering along in his usual serene fashion some little way ahead, but Tom—Tom, full of Browne, whom he had just left, a cigar between his lips, in the pleasantest of moods. Good fellow, Browne; fine colorist. Get him to paint Clemmie some day.

There's luck for you! Did you ever!

But how act on it? 'It's him, sure enough, no fear!' thought

Mrs. P., compassing a spurt. 'Not many 'is build! La, now, if it ain't provokin'! What's that, though? Something white! A corner of 'is—'

'I beg your parding, sir,' said some one; 'but 'ave you dropped your 'andkercher?'

Tom turned.

'O, thanks!' said he.

'Well, to be sure!' exclaimed Mrs. Podmore. 'Why, it's the Captin'! It's Captin' Caryswode!'

Capun'! It's Capun' Caryswode!

Tom stared. Now where had he seen this woman? Somewhere. Not a pleasant face, by any means—Israelitish and coarse.

'Ah,' smiled Poddy, 'you don't know me, sir! That's to be expected. But if I'm not mistaken, a nephew of mine's now in your service, by name John—John Barnes.'

'John!' echoed Tom-'John! Yes, I have a groom called

John.'

A bold flight, Mrs. P.—few bolder.

'Ah, well,' sighed the good soul; 'is mother's a lone 'coman, and I'm 'er sister. And 'ow does he do, sir?'

'O, all right, I believe.'

Well, Mrs. Podmore was glad. That was nice. 'Is pore mother! And what a thing for a lad, now, to get such a place! But Jack always took to 'osses—always, ever since 'e was that 'igh, and used to go with 'is father in the cart of a mornin', being a greengrocer.

Tom, who was one of those good-tempered creatures whom happiness reduces to a state of quite virulent mansuetude, let the woman jabber on. He was not in the least 'grand,' wasn't Tom. It was not necessary.

Hugh's street—Hugh's house. Mrs. Podmore paused.

Now where was it that she could have seen Captin' Caryswode? Lor, his face was that familiar—was it at Miss Templeton's, which she were a good bit there, owin' to—

And now let us return to Clemmie. How that diamond flashed as the white hands flitted to and fro, smoothing out a crease here, straightening a fringe there! and how two dull greedy eyes gleamed seeingly!

On a sudden Hugh Maitland rose, made a step forward, paused;

then another and another.

'Ha!'

'Don't you screech, my dear,' whispered huskily. 'It's no good. We don't interfere with our neighbours here. Suppose you let me keep this, just as a pledge. You see you've deceived me once, and I'm not fond of being done.'

In vain did Clemmie strive, in vain did she cling. He held her as in a vice. Great Heaven!

'Not that,' she gasped, worn out, 'not that! My watch—my—anything—everything—but that!'

Hugh smiled.

Her watch, indeed!

So!

'Come, now,' said he; and off it came.

The girl sank back, covered her face with her hands—her red and swollen hands.

Mr. Maitland reinvigorated his exhausted energies by finishing the gin. Not a bad night's work, take it all in all. Anon she rose and picked up the shawl.

'Will you listen to me?' said she, standing there so calm, so

white—there by the table, the shawl over her arm.

'Proceed.'

'You want money. If I let you have ten pounds by twelve tomorrow, will you give that ring back to me?'

Reason, entreat? As well build walls with thistledown—apostrophise a brick.

'If you keep your word, I'll keep mine,' was the cool answer. 'And now you'd better say good-night, or we shall both lose our beauty sleep.'

A sigh, a rustle, and she was gone.

Would he spare her—would he? And if so, what would he charge—what price would he set on his forbearance? Alas!

But bad as Clemmie knew matters to be, she did not yet know

the worst.

'Hark!' exclaimed Tom suddenly.

He had caught the sound of a woman's voice; a well-known voice—a voice he thought he could have sworn to at any time anywhere.

Mrs. Podmore smiled.

'Ah,' said she, with charming suavity, ''ow sound travels, don't it, sir? It's a friend o' mine as 'as that room—that where the winder's hopen. 'E's such a one for fresh hair, pore feller!'

Tom frowned, and moved on.

'Ah,' said Mrs. Podmore, 'take care! She'll see you.'

Enough.

It was she. There she was, talking to some-

Blank prostration for a moment, then agony. Then, mastering himself by a supreme effort, Tom veered round, white as death, and walked away.

'O, dear,' began Mrs. Podmore, ''ow wexatious! I'm sure now if---'

A growl.



'Ah, that's jest where it is. Now you'll be a-wisitin' it on her, pore creature. But lor, sir, gals will be gals; and once let a 'coman give a man a 'old on 'er—'

'What do you mean?' demanded Tom.

'Well, there's many a young lady has 'as to pacify the hold lover afore bein' hon with the new. You know that, sir.'

An old lover, that beast!

Tom groaned.

'Woman!' he broke forth, unable longer to keep still; but the hot words froze.

A girl came out—ran swiftly down the steps, and across the road.

'Murray-crescent, Clarendon Arms, Notting-'ill!' shouted the conductor of a passing omnibus.

'There,' smiled Mrs. Podmore, 'there! Just in time. Well, good-night, sir.' And a sniff.

Tom set his teeth.

Not much left for a fellow to care to live for now!

#### X.

When Lord Mandoville entered his private sitting-room about half-past nine the following morning, who should he see but Tom—Tom, his hands in his pockets, looking out of window.

The ordinary matutinal greetings over, and the covers removed, they sat down to breakfast. Engrossed in broiled sole and muffins, his lordship did not seem to be aware of his son's haggard look, visible enough in all conscience, as he sat absently stirring his tea face to face with the bright June sunshine.

At length, however, his lack of appetite did arouse Lord Mandoville's curiosity.

'Why, what's the matter?' asked he.

Tom sighed, stretched himself out, looked unutterably.

'Hard up?'

'Not particularly.'

A shrug.

Lord Mandoville seemed huffed; opened the Times.

What on earth was there to be in the dumps about?

Tom fidgeted; did this, did that.

'Look here, father,' said he at length; 'I sha'n't marry.'
Lord Mandoville looked up.

'Eh?' said he.

'I sha'n't marry.'

' Why?'

Then out it came—this all-exceeding, stupendous, most disastrous 'it.'

- 'Humph!' smiled his lordship, having heard. 'But are you sure?'
  - 'Quite.'
  - 'Recollect mistakes are made occasionally.'
  - 'I made no mistake—would God I had!'
  - 'Then you are still fond of her?'

Tom bit his lip. Deuce take it!

Lord Mandoville's face softened. Poor boy, poor bey!

'Come,' said he at length, 'don't be too wise. Let's go through it calmly. In the first place, where did you first see this woman?'

'Why, as I was going to the station.'

"No, but before that?"

Silence.

'Ah,' sagely, 'I see! A hired spy. Tom, my boy, don't be a fool. Go and ask Miss Maitland. Have it out with her. That's the most honourable course and the best.'

Tom seemed to think.

'By Jove,' said he at length, starting up, 'I believe you're

right. I'll go at once.'

'No,' said Lord Mandoville, 'wait a bit. You must get quieted down first, otherwise you would frighten her, and that would be fatal. A woman in a fright is sure to lie, or almost. Go after luncheon.'

'I will,' said Tom. 'I'm much obliged to you.'

#### XI.

On the afternoon succeeding the evening on which Clemmie performed her dolorous pilgrimage, custom flowed steadily into the bar of a sporting public near London-bridge, known as the Flying Dutchman, and kept by a retired professional pugilist, whose past renown as the 'Chippenham Smasher' procured him plenty of business and a numerous clientèle.

Now the 'Smasher' had his wits about him—kept well abreast of his generation. He was, moreover, fond of 'dawgs,' as might be inferred from the presence of the divers toad-headed bandy-legged brutes constantly meandering all over the premises. But 'dawgs' have to be fed. They won't live on nothing. Very mistaken of them, no doubt, but still a fact. Thus, wishing to combine pleasure with profit, worthy Boniface soon 'knocked up' a commodious ratpit in a vacant stable, where, twice a week or so, 'Little Billy,' or some equally 'prime favourite,' showed the way. Little Billy it was, a match being on, twenty pounds a side, and a hundred rats in five minutes, who drew so full a house on the day in question.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;One, two, three.'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Let 'im go!'

How the rats squeaked and scuffled! How the ring laughed and betted!

'Stanch old fellow,' observed an onlooker, striking a light.

'Rather!'

'Four minutes fifty-one seconds and a 'alf,' sung out the 'Smasher,' who, chronograph in hand, had timed the performance. 'Out with the dibs, gents! Pay up, and look pleasant!'

The man laughed—the man who spoke first, a tall, fair, rather dull-looking man, but distinctly superior, from a social point of view,

to his surroundings.

'Ah!' said he. 'Got some more?'

'As many as you like, Sir 'Enry. It's Wenom next. Bring out Wenom, Jim. Look sharp. You'll be pleased with 'er, Sir 'Enry. Such a beauty!' And the 'Smasher' rubbed his hands, large and freckled, and adorned with a huge signet-ring. A shrewd personage the 'Smasher.'

'Ah,' said Sir Henry; 'something fresh. I'm glad of that.

I like variety.'

'So do I,' said the other—not a very prepossessing looking 'other,' a trifle slangy and 'red.' 'By the way, do you know Smiles, Sim Smiles, the pigeon-fancier? He's got some ferrets. Beauties!—you should see them.'

Hugh—Hugh, as I live! But Hugh smartened up, clean, fairly respectable. Clemmie must have been as good as her word, then.

'Indeed,' said Sir Henry; 'Smiles, Smiles? seem to have heard that name somewhere.' And therewith they got into conversation.

Hugh did not lack ease.

' Deuced pleasant fellow,' thought Sir Henry, who would talk to any one, barring a curate, and who rather prided himself on his knack

of getting on with people; 'wonder where he comes from.'

'I say,' said he, a lull having set in—Crotchet had to be looked for; he had slipped his collar, and slunk off somewhere ('The old warmint,' grinned the 'Smasher'),—'well, I say,' said his sirship, eyeing his cigar, 'do you happen to know anything of a place called Notting-hill? You seem to go about a good deal.'

Hugh stared.

'Notting-hill!' he echoed. 'Why Notting-hill?'

'Well, I was down there the other day, and it seemed rather jolly. What are the girls like now—nice?'

Hugh smiled.

'I don't know,' said he; 'tastes differ so.'

Sir Henry sighed.

'They do,' he said, 'dreadfully. Still beauty's beauty. Suppose you give me the benefit of your experience.'

Hugh smirked.

'You see,' plaintively, 'life's so tame. Here am I. I'm rich—I've lots of coin. Yet I'm bored—bored out of my seven senses. The wind bores me, the sun bores me, people bore me. Now I think if I could only have the luck to light on the right sort of little party—lively little party, you know; got brains and—er—heart; able to care for a fellow, not because—'

'I see,' smiled Hugh, 'I see. Well, look here. Suppose-

And then he paused, seemed to think.

'That's it,' cried Sir Henry, 'that's it! You needn't give my name, you know—not at first.'

'All right,' smiled Hugh. 'You won't come any rigs, though?'

he added; 'you'll draw it mild?'

'As milk.'

- 'Where's Sir 'Enry?' asked the 'Smasher,' Crotchet having been dug out, and business being about to recommence.
  - ''E was 'ere a minute ago,' said some one.
  - 'Jem, just run into the bar, and see if you can see Sir 'Enry.'

'Sir 'Enry's left,' said another-'left this five minutes.'

'Drat it!' said the 'Smasher.' 'The werry dawg as 'ud 'ave sooted 'im.'

### XII.

And now hie we back to Clemmie—poor, sad, ill-used little Clemmie.

Wearied out with the fatigues of the previous day, she slept well, and awoke in consequence much refreshed.

With the postman too came hope. For she had a letter, a letter from Herr Stroh, containing—O heavens!—a cheque, a cheque for ten guineas, she having undertaken several of that highly successful gentleman's pupils during his temporary absence. Could anything be luckier? Good Herr Stroh! dear Herr Stroh! with his round bald pate, and globular blue eyes, and guttural accents! I do believe, had the Herr chanced to look in just then, Clemmie would have straightway fallen at his feet and hugged his knees, so wild, so overweening was her gratitude.

Yet what had she to be grateful about? She had earned the money. It was hers by right, not favour, the silly creature.

But there it was. O joy! O bliss! Now surely the worst was over; she might again breathe freely. Well, she would get it cashed, and put it up—in a box, she thought, securely sealed, because that would do to send the ring back in.

She would have liked to have gone herself; but as ill-luck would have it, this was one of her busy mornings; so that was out of the question. Still she felt fairly cheerful; it was such a lovely day. Everything looked so bright, so pleasant, including a certain alert little body.

'What a nice-looking girl!' said the men to themselves as she hurried by.

But shine the sun never so, bread must be had.

Twelve had struck before she got back.

- 'Well, Anne,' said she—Anne was on her knees, whitening the steps—'anybody been?'
  - 'Yes, miss,' said Anne, scouring hard; 'the little girl.'
  - 'Well, and-'
  - 'There wasn't no answer.'
  - 'No answer!' All the pink fled.

The little girl, I must tell you, was a small but discreet personage who 'ran' Miss Maitland's errands, being the offspring of Miss Maitland's laundress. This morning she had run further than usual, having run, in fact, as far as Lisson-grove.

Clemmie felt stunned. There! what was to be done now? Suppose Tom were to come; suppose— But something must be done, some plan hit upon. Covering her face with her hands, and sinking into a seat, the girl tried to steady her whirling brain, to discover a way out of this horrible labyrinth. One thing seemed certain: the ring was gone. Hugh had pawned it. He had judged her by himself, being utterly incapable of anything like belief, and so had taken the matter into his own hands, and helped himself to the money. Suppose she were to write?

Up she sprang—flew to her desk. In less than no time she had scribbled a note—a very pitiful, imploring, brief note—beseeching that the 'ticket' might be sent or brought to her without delay. Not a word of reproach. She knew whom she had to deal with. To sally forth and hunt up a messenger—a pupil would be here almost directly—did not take long.

A brief space, and she was at work again, hard at work—hammer and tongs, hammer and tongs.

At length the weary hour came to an end; at length she was free—free to writhe.

Hark! a knock! It must be the woman. Now for it! How she listened!

'Tell Miss Maitland as the gen'leman were out, but would call.' So he was not gone, then. A somewhat bitter smile curved the sweet lips as Anne re-delivered the message.

How much would a pawnbroker be likely to advance on a ring like that? The girl's heart stood still as she tried to think; for she must redeem it, or give up hope, love—everything that made life precious.

Women care for things—things they wear, things about them—in a way which men, I think, have no idea of. Clemmie's little stock of jewelry had all been her mother's. So too many of the ornaments—pretty ornaments, and in good taste—dotted about.

Her books—not many, it is true, but valuable—had belonged to her father; her doves were the gift of a student friend now living abroad; her music, plenteous and good, was for her a very garner-house of delightful memories. Simple as it all was, she loved it; and when she thought that soon, soon—well, it hurt, that was all.

Her pupils, you see, owed her very little, and that little was not yet due. Nor were she to send in her bill to each one of them that very day, could she expect instant payment? No; there was no escape. The things must go—must.

But was it not miserable? Was ever girl so wretched—ever, ever—since the world began? She told herself 'No,' and began to cry—to cry, indeed, as though she would never stop crying—when—

Rat-tat-a-tat!

In marched Tom—Tom, a tea-rose in his button-hole, radiant, smiling—if anything a shade happier-looking than usual.

Clemmie sighed.

'Halloa!' said he, quite aghast. Truly a sorry spectacle. 'What's the matter?' he went on at length; for she sat mute—mute and motionless; and he came and sat down by her, and took her hand—her right hand; the other, hastily done up in her handkerchief, being hidden away.

Never a sound.

Tom eyed her.

'Very odd,' he thought. 'Come,' said he at length, with a dash of sternness, 'this is absurd. I want to have a talk with you—a nice quiet talk.'

'I can't talk,' then broke she forth wildly; 'I've no heart to

talk. You'd better go. Yes, do, please.'

'But why?'

She shook her head, her poor throbbing red-hot head. He might well ask 'why.'

Tom's face clouded. He did not like the looks of it, not at all.

'Well,' said he presently, 'suppose I make a clean breast of it. I know—know all.'

'All!' she echoed, shuddering.

'Yes,' he said, 'all. And I want an explanation. I want you to tell me what took you there, and who the fellow is, and—and all about it.'

Clemmie sighed.

'O me,' said she, 'who has done this, who has done this!' And up she got, began walking about the room like one agonised, uttering a low wail the while, a little low piteous wail that would have wrung your heart had you heard it.

Tom bore, but it was hard.

'Then you will not tell me,' he said presently, wiping his fore-head.

'I can't.'

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He rose.

'Very well,' he said; 'then so be it,' and took his hat.

She paused. She looked at him. Could he mean it—did he mean it?

- 'Well,' said he sullenly. He would give her just one more chance.
  - 'Have patience.'

He smiled. It is not well that a man should smile so.

'Trust'me. I have done nothing wrong.'

'Trust you?' he echoed. 'Do you talk to me of trust?'

- 'Ah,' sighed she, 'you will not listen; you mock, you sneer.' And she turned away, walked about again. It was too terrible, too cruel. What should she do—what should she do?
- 'Well,' said he anon, 'there's no good in keeping on like this. You've made your choice.'

She turned on him like a thing at bay.

'My choice,' she echoed, fierce with pain; 'my choice! Tom! Do you want to shake me off; do you want to be set free?'

'Does it look like it?'

'Then be less hard on me. Have some pity. God knows I've endured enough. O, don't you turn away! Tom,'dear Tom!' And she fell on her knees, and put out her hands to him.

He looked down. On a sudden his face changed—it had softened.

'The ring,' said he; 'that ring I gave you!'

Clemmie cried out. She had forgotten.

Tom's chest heaved; he set his teeth; he seemed quite convulsed with rage.

'Fool, fool!' he broke forth at length. 'What has become of it?'

'What have you done with it, I ask you?'

Still silence—only a low sobbing sound. The bowed head sank lower, lower. Awhile he stood, then:

'Cured!' said he-said bitterly, and went.

'What's gone wrong with Caryswode?' yawned Darke—Ince Darke—throwing down the World, and strolling to the window—the bow-window, club bow-window, sufficiently well known. 'I met him just now. He looked about as sweet as a bear with a—'

'O, don't you know?' said Max—Max Lyte, son of Lord Semandugh, Irish peer. Max was generally supposed to be rather in with 'Cass.' 'Haven't you heard about Brandreth and—'

And therewith ensued much talk of a vastly entertaining nature, no doubt, if you could only see the point of it.

#### XIII.

'HER soul within her sick and sore With the roughness and barrenness of life,'

sat Clemmie, like one in great suffering, who has inhaled just sufficient chloroform to deaden the worst. She knew she was in torment, yet was there a veil between.

Then Hugh came—Hugh the terrible. He was alone, having left Sir Henry in 'the Grove.' How smart he was! how very hideously, sickeningly smart! A glance told that.

'H'm,' smiled he, as he plumped himself down in the arm-chair.

'Got the toothache?'

Clemmie sighed. She did not feel sufficiently alive to speak.

- 'Humph!' said he again, after a while. 'Well, this is gay, very. May I venture to inquire,' mock deferentially, 'what it is you require?'
  - 'The ticket.'
- 'O,' said Hugh, 'the ticket. Well, not to be ponderous, there it is,' taking something from his waistcoat-pocket, in which coin jingled cheerfully, and throwing it on the table.

Again silence. But Mr. Maitland's curiosity was piqued. 'I say,' remarked he anon, 'what's the matter, what's up?'

'I wonder you dare ask me,' was the grave answer, given gravely.

'Rot! Come, out with it. Our tall friend has cut up rough, I suppose.'

No answer.

'You see,' explanatorily, 'I couldn't be quite sure.'

The veined lids drooped, the fair breast heaved.

'Cannot you leave me?' said the girl wearily. 'Have you not done enough?'

'That's all very well, very pretty and romantic and harrowing; but, you see, I mean business. Now I can put you up to a good thing, no end of a good thing, if you like to go in for it. By Jove, I can!' waxing strenuous.

'Will you go?' exclaimed Clemmie, stung past endurance.

'Your villany has cost me more than life.'

'Gammon! Look here, now; I've wit, you've looks. What should hinder us from—'

'O, go!' she broke forth; 'for pity's sake, go! The very sound of your voice maddens me. May I not die in peace?'

'What are you talking about?'

It did sound rather startling.

The man eyed her.

'Well,' he ejaculated after a while, 'I can't stay here all day. You've got the ticket, so I suppose you're satisfied.'

'Quite!'

'I thought I should have got more than fifteen pounds; however, perhaps it's just as well I didn't, as you'll have to pay it.'

'Perhaps it is.' And a smile—such a smile!

Mr. Maitland laughed, rose, then frowned, shrugged his shoulders, and said, 'Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' said Clemmie.

## XIV.

It was about eleven o'clock, I think, when John Miller reached home that night; for contrary to custom he had dined in town, and subsequently joined a convivial gathering, instituted by a fellow-clerk in honour of his own temerity in being about to undertake, at no very distant period, the dubious joys and certain pains of married life. Hearing sounds, as of some one moving about, as he hung up his coat, he—this reveller—thought he would just ask a certain young lady how she did after her late nocturnal ramble. Tap-tap!

'Come in.'

Why, she was packing! A large deal box stood open on the hearthrug.

'Dear me!' said John, quite aghast; and then, recovering himself, tried to seem unconcerned. He had a horror of a fuss, and it was no business of his, so to speak. Still he was surprised greatly.

'How busy you always are, Miss Maitland!' remarked he at length. John's typical woman, I must tell you, was a being made one half of catgut and the other of pin-wire. Activity, in his opinion, ranked facile princeps of virtues. 'Do you know what time it is?'

'After eleven, I suppose.'

'Close on twelve. You must have been very tired last night.'

Clemmie said nothing, seemed quite taken up with what she was about, namely, arranging a quantity of unbound sonatas by Clementi according to their proper order.

John watched her, watched her narrowly. Surely a thought of pain about that mouth, traces of tears beneath those eyes.

'Come,' said he—said coaxingly. 'Don't do any more tonight. Let it be till to-morrow.'

A smile.

'O, but I must!'

'But you are not going away?'

'No.'

Then again silence.

What did it all mean? What had she got in her head now? John felt nonplussed, and a little cross. Why would she not confide in him? 'I have a right to be trusted,' thought he moodily; 'I have done nothing to make her doubt me.'

- 'By the way,' said he at length, 'do you know a Mrs. Podmore has been arrested on a charge of baby-farming?'
  - 'Indeed!' said Clemmie, looking about.
  - 'It seems a very bad case of the sort.'

' So !'

Another pause, really quite embarrassing.

- 'Well,' said John at length, getting up slowly—he had found a seat—'it's time I was moving. Did you get the shawl?'
  - 'Yes.'
  - 'I'm glad of that.'

Clemmie smiled.

- 'Perhaps,' said she at length, dryly, 'you think as badly of me as—as every one else?'
  - ' Why?'

She shook her head.

'It's a bad world,' said she; 'a bad, mean, cruel world!'—not making an outcry, though—quite quietly.

John smiled a trifle feebly.

'That's severe,' said he. 'The world, I suspect, is pretty much like everything else, namely, a mixture. I tell you what, though,' he added, having relished his own sagacity; 'you must take care what you're about with that fellow. He's a queer character.'

Clemmie smiled.

'That may be,' she said. 'He cannot harm me now.'

A nod.

'That's all right,' said John; 'I am very glad to hear that,' and held out his hand.

But Clemmie paused. She did not seem at all in a hurry to say good-bye.

'Mr. Miller,' said she, looking down, 'how long have we known each other?'

John thought.

'Well, let me see,' said he; 'two years, I think.'

'You look on me as your friend?'

'That I do,' cordially.

She smiled.

'Good-night,' said she, and put out her hand.

A clasp—a kiss—farewell.

### XV.

THE lobby of a well-known metropolitan theatre; the first night of an entirely new and original three-act comedy by a new author; the title-rôle to be played by a new actress, a débutante, in fact, whose provincial successes, amply well chronicled, would seem to warrant this somewhat bold step of setting her plump before 'the town,'—surely an attractive programme.

Nevertheless, the piece dragged—dragged horribly. Mademoiselle la débutante, who, it was confidently asserted, would simply electrify you, failed to electrify any one, so far as I can remember, except the prompter, who, poor man, had a sad time of it, and was taken home in a dead faint, from which he did not recover till long after every one was up the next morning. This apart, however. What I am concerned with is the lobby, and the people in the lobby—two people, both men.

'I say,' said Mr. Maitland, recovering from an immense yawn,

'let's cut this. It's awful squash!'

'It is,' said Sir Henry. 'Thing is, where can we go?'

'Well,' said Hugh, consulting an aluminium watch, purchased that morning, 'gravel-stones' having been fairly plentiful of late, 'I'm afraid I must hook it. I've got a call to make before I turn in.'

'O,' said Sir Henry, 'all right. I'll drop you if you like.' And

they sauntered down the steps.

'Where's the fellow to drive to?' wearily, a hansom having rattled up.

' Metropolitan Railway, Notting-hill.'

- 'Metropolitan Railway, Notting-hill!' bawled Sir Henry; and away they went.
- 'So,' observed he presently, having got his cigar to light, 'it's a barmaid!'

'Eh?' said Hugh, looking mystified.

'Well, this spoon of yours—this girl you're going to see.' Hugh smiled dryly.

'In other words'—and a pause—'my sister.'

'Your sister!' exclaimed Sir Henry—'your sister!'

'Certainly, my sister,'

'Then her name's Maitland too?'

'That's the view I take.'

'By Jove, yes, of course. Well now, I do believe—look here, where does she live?'

'In Murray-crescent.'

'That's it—that's it!' and Sir Henry slapped his knee, got quite excited. 'You know Caryswode—Tom Caryswode—will be Lord Mandoville?'

'By hearsay.'

'Well;' and then out it came, bit by bit.

This, then, was the secret of Clemmie's wretchedness, this the reason she had so battled for that ring. And all for a paltry fifteen pounds!

Hugh groaned. Fool, fool!

I tell you, the wofullest wretch in all Babylon had no cause to envy Mr. Maitland that night.

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Hang it, what a beast it is !--poor old shambling, used up-

'Get along, can't you!' shouted Hugh. 'Are you going to keep us here all night?'

Sir Henry roared, lay back, and laughed till his very sides ached.

'O, I say,' said he, 'you'll be the death of me!'

Hugh burnt. He rather wished he might.

'It's deucedly provoking,' said he anon; 'she might have trusted me.'

Sir Henry sighed. A woman trust!

'My dear fellow,' said he blandly, 'that shows how little you know.'

Hugh's mouth, never too agreeable, took an uglier curve; he waved his stick.

'Shall I wait for you?' said Sir Henry.

'If you like.'

'No need to keep the cab, though.'

'No.'

'Thank you, sir,' grinned cabby. Sir Henry had his virtues.

At the garden-gate Hugh stopped. Unlocked, by Jove!

'Stay here,' said he, not a little relieved, I may observe, 'I won't be long.'

'All right,' smiled Sir Henry; 'I'll have a think. I say, though, don't be too fraternal.'

Hngh laughed, hastened on.

Which was the house, now? Not so easy to tell in this semi-darkness—quite the contrary. He slackened speed, peered about. Wasn't there some sort of statue, though—a Cupid or something—in the balcony? Hooray, that's it! 'Nothing like keeping your eyes open,' thought Mr. Maitland, restored for the moment to his usual pitch of smug equanimity. 'But O!' and down he went again. No getting over that.

Well, but how was it to be managed? After all, despite that one ortuitous circumstance, things did not look promising. The house was shut up. Every one seemed to have gone to bed. Still, faint heart—

Hugh stole forward, stole up the steps. Ha! a light. Good. He got into the balcony. A flower-pot turned over. Hang it! He held his breath, listened. Not a sound. Reassured, he crept on.

Now the window was long, of the sort called French. Hugh tapped. He did not want her to be frightened, as in that case she might cry out, and noise was to be avoided; so he gave a gentle tap. Still silence, dead silence, as of a grave.

He tapped again, this time a little louder. 'Dropped off,' thought he.

Then, time being precious, he gently pushed open the window, unbolted, as luck would have it, stepped in, to find himself in the presence of—

### XVI.

Was it death?

How still she lay! so white and still—terribly white, terribly still.

Hugh scarce breathed. And had it come to this? Had he brought her to this? Alas, alas! Gazing, he stood.

How bare the room looked too—strangely bare! The doves blinked and cooed. Hark! footsteps—a knock.

'Miss Maitland,' said some one.

Miller! the fellow in the Glengarry. He'd get a doctor. Deuced awkward, though. Suppose—

Not even now, now at this supremest of moments, could Hugh Maitland struggle free of self.

John knocked again, hammered lustily; he meant to be in somehow, that was plain. The fact was, he had heard some rather odd noises as he sat smoking overhead, and knowing that Clemmie was still 'up,' had thought it advisable to give a look round.

'All right,' said Hugh, and turned the key.

John fell back.

- 'You here!' he exclaimed, in a tone of the utmost astonishment.
  - 'All right,' said Hugh again grimly. 'Look there!'
- 'There' was the sofa, on which lay Clemmie, her face upturned, her eyes closed, like one dead.

'What's to be done?'

'God knows,' said John. 'Poor girl, poor girl!'

'That's all very well,' said Hugh. 'Where can one get a doctor? There's a man called Grey living at the corner.'

'Go and fetch him, then,' said John. 'Stay; what's that?' catching sight of a bottle on the table. 'Laudanum! Good heavens! How— Tell him that; say it's poison.'

Away dashed Hugh.

On his way through the garden he ran against Sir Henry.

'Halloa!' said he; 'why this thusness?'

'My sister's gone and poisoned herself! I say—you'll go quicker than I—there's a man lives at the corner—a man called Grey. Knock him up, have him out, bring him round. Make haste!'

Superfluous that.

Then Hugh turned, but his legs shook. He leant against a tree; groaned aloud. He felt as if he must die too.

On reëntering the little sitting-room he found John on his knees, his arms about Clemmie, her head on his shoulder.

'Well?' said he.

'I've sent some one. I happened to have a friend waiting for me. Any change?'

John shook his head.

Time passed. Hugh thought he had never yet known what suspense meant. He walked about, he sat down, he got up and walked about again.

'Sickening,' exclaimed he, 'sickening!'

'I am afraid-' began John, in his quiet Scotch way-

Here a carriage drove up. 'Thank God!' said both.

'Go and open the door,' added John. 'There's no one up.'

Hugh obeyed.

But the bolts being mastered and the chain let down—a fine noise it made—lo! not one man nor two—a whole posse. Hugh felt dumbfoundered.

'O, there you are!' said Sir Henry. 'Well, you see I've got the doctor, and a precious chase I had; and here's Caryswode and his father—just met them at the gate.'

'O,' said Hugh; 'will you come in?'

And in they trooped, Tom last. Tom looked mighty straight, I do assure you.

'Up-stairs or down?' smiled a fair, slight, little man, taking off his hat and setting it on the slab.

'In here,' said Hugh.

A brief space, and judgment was given. Life was not yet extinct: they might hope.

'Thank God!' said Tom.

Hugh turned away.

'Might I trouble you for that bottle?' smiled the doctor, still watch in hand. 'I have an idea—'

But here an ominous click-clack, click-clack, together with subdued murmurings of female voices, announced that Mrs. Boodles was astir.

A woman of spirit Mrs. Boodles; no 'goings-on' in any house she had the control of, I promise you. Dight in print wrapper and cap, armed, moreover, with a veteran pair of curling-tongs, she came.

'May I ask—' commenced she, glaring fiercely at Sir Henry, who gazed on her with naïvest awe. She presented a new phase of feminine déshabille to his sated intelligence.

'Sh!' interposed the doctor; 'perfect quiet, Mrs. Boodles, perfect quiet, if you please.'

Now, as it happened, the doctor was well known to Mrs. B.

'Such a nice man; so perlite always, and clever with children—werry.'

Mrs. B. softened, softened visibly, to the extent even of taking a look at Clemmie, and inquiring whether there was 'hanythink' as she could do for the 'por' dear young lady, than whom a sweeter creature never lived, though flighty of late, as might be seen; which Mrs. Boodles didn't like such sudden starts, never knowin' no good to come of 'em; but she 'oped it were nothink hinfectious.

'O dear, no,' smiled the doctor; 'hysteria-nothing worse.'

'Hysteria!' echoed Lord Mandoville, knitting his brows. 'I thought she had taken laudanum.'

The smile deepened.

'She doubtless intended to take laudanum.'

'Well!' a rather impatient 'well.' Lord Mandoville put no great faith in doctors.

'She took-cough-mixture.'

'Nonsense!' with perhaps just the faintest glimmer of a smile.

'By Jove!' said Sir Henry.

'Yes,' smiled the doctor, 'you have every reason to be astonished. Such a thing might not happen twice in a century. The way I explain it to myself—'

'Well, but,' broke forth Mrs. Boodles, ''ow comed it then she

swounded? Cough-mixture don't make folks swound.'

'Exhaustion,' placidly; 'exhaustion, and possibly some slight irregularity in the action of the heart.'

'Humph! Well, it's a fine set-out, I must say.'

A sigh.

'There,' said the doctor; 'there, you see!'

- 'Miraculous!' said Tom. 'Who could have believed it!'
- 'Myraklus, indeed!' sniffed Mrs. Boodles. 'For my part, I don't like sech meraculs—a supplantin' Providence!'

John smiled; he could smile now.

- 'Well,' said Sir Henry, 'this is very jolly. I'm sure I'm awfully glad, for your sake, old fellow,' gripping Tom's arm. 'But, you know, I feel rather in the way, you know; and suppose I look you up tomorrow?'
- 'Very well,' said Tom abstractedly, and nodding to Hugh, who seemed bewitched.

Sir Henry went, Mrs. Boodles following him out into the hall. Mrs. Boodles did not like the looks of that young man—not at all. He put her in mind of the 'feller' who picked her pocket in a second-class railway-carriage between Bristol and Gloucester. Just such another, with his gingerbread and his railway-rug.

'And now,' said Lord Mandoville, when peace prevailed again, 'suppose we endeavour to arrive at something like a rational understanding. In the first place,' turning to Hugh, 'would you be good

enough to tell us your name, and how it is that you have got mixed up in this affair?'

Hugh sighed.

'My name is Maitland,' replied he, his hands clasped behind him, looking-well, anything but inclined to stand on his own dignity.

'Maitland!' echoed Tom. 'How is that?'

'Clemmie is my sister.'

'She is?'

'She is.'

Silence.

'More meraculs!' said Mrs. Boodles. 'I wonder oo I am now?

Not myself, for certain. Try them smellin'-salts, doctor.'

- 'Suppose,' smiled Lord Mandoville, 'we were to change the scene for a little—go into some other room. Then you would be able to apply what remedies you may deem expedient, and we could There are various points that seem to require talk matters over. elucidation. Have you a room vacant?'
- 'Lor, yes, sir,' says Mrs. Boodles; 'there's the front parlour; step in there. What's that, though?' catching sight of an unaddressed letter on the table.
  - 'Give it me,' said Tom.

'But it's open,' said Hugh.

'Ah,' said Tom, 'so it is. Come in, Miller;' for John hung back—not a man to push himself was John.

'Well,' said Lord Mandoville, the door being shut, 'and what

about this mysterious document?'

'Well,' said Tom, looking it over, 'it seems a sort of will.'

'A young lady's will. Come, that sounds 'A will!' smilingly. tempting. Read it out.'

Hugh sighed—Hugh felt very second-rate.

'By the bye, though,' said Tom, 'it's not a will; it's a letter, addressed to some one called Hugh.'

A pause. John crossed his legs.

'That's me,' said Hugh at length, reluctantly.

'You'd better read it, then.'

But Hugh shook his head—seemed to labour under emotion.

'No,' said he, his hand seeking his coat-pocket; 'I'd rather you did, if—if you don't mind.'

Tom seemed struck, smoothed his moustache; then he began:

'My dear Hugh,—By the time you receive this I shall be dead. I can bear no more. There is no need of me in this world, so I go. But I have prayed for you. Dear Hugh, I forgive you—forgive you all! I do indeed; and I am about to die. O, do not let me hope in vain! I have one friend—one wise good friend; his name is Miller. I wish him to have my doves and flowers; I know he will

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like them for my sake. Go to him, ask him to help you—to put you in the way of earning an honest livelihood, and so becoming a better man. I believe he will do so.' (John stared hard at a particular rosebud.) 'I have had to sell all my things to get back the ring. But I have got it, and returned it; so I am free. Good-night!'

Silence. No one seemed particularly inclined to speak.

'And did you get it?' asked Hugh at length.

'Yes,' said Lord Mandoville. Tom held his peace. 'That is what brought us here.'

'Ah!' said Hugh; and turning away, broke down utterly—cried

like a child.

Again silence—painful silence—broken only by the sobs of that wretched man.

Suddenly the door opened; Doctor Grey looked in.

'O,' said he, and then paused. What was the matter now?

- 'How is your patient?' smiled Lord Mandoville, imperturbable as ever.
- 'O,' smiled the doctor, who was a man of the world, and knew when to see and when not, 'as well as ever. Bright as a button, as the nurses say.'

'Bravo!' cried Tom.

The doctor laughed. Not a bad connection, well worked.

- 'In that case,' said Lord Mandoville, 'our best plan will be to--'
  - 'Wait a minute,' said Tom.
  - 'My darling!'
  - 'O Tom!'
  - 'O Clemmie!'

And then they kissed and kissed.

- 'How could you be so foolish?'
- 'How could you be so unkind?'
- 'But it is all over?'

And Clemmie smiled, smiled up at him out of those sweet clear eyes of hers—eyes whence the light had all but fled utterly. Enough!

### XVII.

I HAVE little more to add, and that little shall be told as concisely as possible; tags are bad things at best.

Clemmie, being ordered change of air, soon left London. Aunt Millicent wished her to come and stay with them—stay till her marriage, if she would. Aunt Millicent seemed to have grown very affectionate all of a sudden; uncle George too—'More meraculs,' as Mrs. Boodles would say. Well, there would be haycocks to sit upon, and nosegays to gather, and Tom to talk to. Tom must come,

of course. So Clemmie went, and there she stopped; and from there she was married, one cloudless August morning, with the flowers all about her, and the sun shining on her, and surely the best luck awaiting her that ever bride chanced on.

It was a pretty wedding, and they were a handsome couple. I vow Lord Mandoville felt quite proud as he looked at them.

And there an end. The tale is told. Not quite, though.

John Miller lives on at the old place. Now and then he finds his way to Bruton-street; now and then he spends an hour or two in a certain bright flower-scented drawing-room; but I do not know that it makes him any the happier. Yet—

'Talk not of wasted affection; affection never was wasted. If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment.'

And Hugh—what of Hugh? Well, Hugh, properly speaking, no longer exists, so great is the change wrought by regular habits, work, and regret. This last, not least.

Madge Templeton died abroad, at some out-of-the-way place in Switzerland, soon after Tom's marriage; at least so they say; no one quite knows.

Now Kitty Palmer rules the Row, vogue la galère.

Sir Henry is seriously thinking of going into Parliament, when the family borough falls vacant. He has been shooting snipes in Algeria lately, and did the Danube last autumn. He proposes, should he be unlucky in public life, to turn traveller in real earnest, and lay siege to the heart of Africa—'Heart, of course.'

So wags the world.

'We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial.'

### THE 'SPELLING BEE'

WE have lately acclimatised an institution which is making a high bid for popularity. We take our pleasure sadly, and an element of toil is an invariable ingredient of our most favoured recreations. may have been a knowledge of this characteristic which suggested the introduction of the 'Spelling Bee.' Here amusement would go hand-in-hand with improvement, and the sternest moralist might acquit himself of wasting time. It would also have the desirable effect of bringing the sexes together. It had become practically impossible to lure men to an afternoon party under any pretence. This, then, would be a sure means of enlisting their sympathies. They had been making merry so long over the peculiarities of ladies' orthography, that they would hail the opportunity of asserting their own views. But somehow the gentlemen exhibit very faint enthusiasm. They have a general idea that when ladies show any decided eagerness for a contest it is because they are assured of victory. Besides, the male speller, though conscious of his superiority in the composite words, is very nervous about the little Saxon terms, which are derived from nothing and consequently afford no clue. He has never been taught spelling; but he has heard of long lists of words committed to memory at girls' schools. It would be pardonable in a lady to break down over some Greek term which she had never seen. But how painful would his confusion be were he to blunder in some debatable trifle, or betray any indecision as to the number of is or to be would allot to a word!

When we read the verses which Chaucer indites to his 'herte's lady,' who cares for him both in 'hele' and sickness, we begin to doubt Spenser's dictum that the accent is the 'onely or chiefest hardnesse of our moother tongue.' If we summon him in evidence against himself, we find that his spelling is both eccentric and inconsistent. The lavish use of letters habitual to that leisurely age is well shown in a stanza where he apostrophises his love:

'Whether lying reastlesse in heavy bedde, or else Sitting so cheerelesse at the cheerefull boorde, or else Playing alone carelesse on hir heavenlie virginals.'

Though in the next stanza he writes 'bed' for 'bedde.' One would have thought it must be spelling that was in his mind when he talks of it sometimes 'comming shorte of that it should, and sometimes exceeding the measure.' He calls his own art indifferently 'ryming' and 'riming;' and 'sillable' and 'syllable' stand side by side, apparently without suggesting any sense of incongruity. There is a

Hibernian smack about 'threasure,' which was perhaps acquired during the poet's residence in Ireland; but there can be no such excuse for many a homely English word which presents itself in strange and ever-varying disguise. For instance, when the 'daughter of the woody nymphe' is tending the 'wofull squire' with loving zeal, she stumbles frightfully in her spelling. When she had 'fownd the hearbes (or herbes) shee pownded them small and did in pieces bruze,' and subsequently 'scruze' them into the wound, the latter word perhaps suggesting the z in 'uze' which closes the next line. It would be unfair to be too critical about this passage, for the maiden was doubtless in much perturbation. But when we are informed that versifying may be 'wonne with custom'—a thing which we had always doubted—we are forced to the conclusion that it must be easier to write poetry than to spell it.

When we come to a later period we find the same difficulty about our 'moother tongue.' The men who fought for King and Parliament were very indifferent penmen. Probably even at this date the art was left too exclusively to clerks and others who were unfit to swing a sword. We read of an order to a Cromwellian captain to 'pule downe' the house of a delinquent and carry away the 'ffloor.' The cornet who wrote 'youst' for 'used' might at any rate plead a precedent in his profession. About this time too a man left an estate to his 'wiff and soon;' and in an inventory of goods given to a daughter-in-law we find such articles as a 'peir of shetes, a matres, a pelowe, a weddyng girdell, some spones, sawsers, a basyn of pewtre,' and other matters, and finally a 'bonet to be bought at the feir.' One would have imagined that no amount of ingenuity could cram another letter into 'which,' yet we find it 'whyche.' A bookseller speaks of a 'sett' of books. People 'remaine severall daies' in a place, or 'returne' home from it. They 'doe' a thing in 'errour, yett gett noe pitty' for it. They waste an e, according to our thinking, on 'whoe, noe, and mee,' and several consonants on the word 'spightefull.' But then comes the inevitable law of compensation. We hear of a man who was picked up 'suppost drunk;' 'owe' appears as 'ou,' 'ey' for 'eye;' and the accomplished Andrew Marvel makes 'dar' rhyme with 'war.' Even their own names were no trifles to these worthies. If we refer to any family of antiquity we shall see under what various titles it appears. Indeed this well-known failing of our ancestors has been taken advantage of by unscrupulous heralds to graft all sorts of foreign branches on to the parent stock. It may be said that these people spoke a different language from our own; but it is to the absence of any standard in spelling, rather than to its eccentricity, that we have been drawing attention. In a letter of a few lines they will often employ the same word three or four times, ingeniously varied on each occasion.

Should a bad speller feel in want of consolation, he will find himself in excellent company with Marlborough, in trouble about the description of his 'batles;' with the Indian officer who put too many gs in tent-peg; or with the celebrated admiral who complained that the paper which published his letters had garbled them, when, in fact, the editor had only reduced them to English. Or he may recollect that, when the plague of competitive examinations first broke out, it was asserted that the spelling of English was both an useless and an impossible accomplishment.

The new mode is, we believe, to teach this difficult art by sight. and this method has much to recommend it; for, as pronunciation depends on the correctness of the ear, so does spelling on the eye, and the time spent in committing lists of words to memory will be comparatively wasted. Surely in these days, when we have Royal Commissions on every imaginable subject, we might call for a report on the best method of reducing our spelling to a system. It is a wonder that a busy age like ours, that curtails its words unwarrantably—'writing its friends, Tuesday, &c.,' and squabbling for the privilege of sending telegrams in cipher—should be so tolerant of our superfluity of letters, even bringing back those which we had hoped were for ever gone. Surely every one would be a gainer were our 'oughs' and many another strange combination relegated to eternal limbo. It appeared so needless to disfigure pure Latin words like 'labor' and 'honor,' that a set was made against the interloping letter; but already the stream of fashion seems to be returning into its old course. The present generation has applied the pruninghook without sparing to our punctuation; probably the same process would be equally advantageous to our spelling. But even should we ever overcome the 'hardnesse of our moother-tongue,' our task would not be ended. We are citizens of the world now, and as such are required to spell languages which are as much in want of a standard as our own once was. Those distinguished visitors who come to us every summer, flaunting their tropical plumage under our gray sky, appear, like our forefathers, to write their names as best they can, or according to the whim of the moment. Then, the savants never seem able to establish an Oriental code. Is it Muslim, or Moslem, or Mussulman? And is an African prince to be allowed to exasperate geographers by prefixing 'mt' and 'tch' to the names of his lakes and mountains, till they are as hard to disengage from the mouth as a Welsh patronymic?

There are many devices known to the diffident speller. He may write the obnoxious word so that no one can read it; and, since bad writing and talent are convertible terms, he will rather gain by the stratagem; or he may smear his word by laying two pages together, like the man who wished to raise a doubt in the examiner's mind as to the exact position of his Greek accents. Again, the experienced

letter-writer can generally out-manœuvre his enemy by some fresh combination, provided he does not get too deeply involved in his sentence before he discovers his presence. But none of these innocent little wiles will avail you anything when once seated in the It may be some outlandish word which the inquisitor has discovered lurking among the zs, or be the coinage of some overwrought lexicographer's brain. Never mind: it is a dictionary word, and you are bound to attempt it. In this case you may cover your confusion by suggesting that it is a term that no one ever But what if the said inquisitor, well knowing the joints in male harness, should propound some simple Saxon word! female catechumens at your side give a deprecatory glance, expressive of disapprobation that you should be subjected to so light an ordeal. You grow hot and cold by turns; there is a hurly-burly in your brain. Is it ei or ie? Are there two ts, two ls, two rs? If it was the verb you might manage it; but the participle—telle est la difficulté! To doubt is to be lost, so you blurt it out; and a smile, which even feminine pity cannot quite repress, shows you your error. You try, therefore, to look as if you were not 'harassed' or 'embarrassed,' and as though you would be quite equal to the description of the indigestible meal made by the penniless peddler's pony, were the effort required of you. In due course you will have your revenge, for the ladies will commit themselves sadly over those strange composite terms, of the meaning of which they are naturally Modern discovery has supplied your tormentor with a whole armory of these. There are engines of destruction and explosive oils with names as terrible as the substances they indicate. Even peaceful science is bristling with hidden dangers. Light and heat, air and water, are daily yielding up some new secret, and a new word must be struck in its honour. It may be pure-bred Greek or Latin; sometimes it is hybrid, or an explanatory tail is affixed to the inventor's name. Happily our language, too barren to describe the mystery of ladies' toilettes or the chefs-d'œuvre of the cook, has to fall back upon French. But even in these departments there is more need of wariness than heretofore, for there are words which would pose an entire company to be seen attached to some 'figureimprover' or pasted across the cork of a magic pickle-bottle. Provided that the new bantling born into our cosmopolitan circle be dressed in a garb somewhat consonant to our ideas, we are bound to adopt him.

It may be that you will leave your entertainer's drawing-room with a subdued feeling of resentment; you have lost a little money and a good deal of reputation. But be consoled; you have been assisting at an entertainment in which instruction is sugared over with amusement.

### LODGING-HOUSE KEEPERS

It is a truism that the 'necessary' cat attaches itself to the house, and not to the inmates. Taking the average of lodging-house keepers, it would not be difficult to trace an analogy between them and the quadruped which enjoys the special protection of Lady Burdett Coutts. Like puss they can fawn and they can scratch. Of the species some prefer to walk with velvety paws, concealing the talons ever ready for instant action; others display their claws in season and out of season, and much delight in hissing and spitting, especially if you happen to be so imbecile as to attempt to pet them. All, true to their feline instinct, revel in the luxury of indirect or direct larceny. They would rather extort a bonus in the shape of overcharge than receive the same amount as a gift; they moreover enjoy most those tit-bits which are acquired by stealth and in defiance of the strict rule of honesty. In one detail only does the They seldom attain to the cleanliness of the decent parallel fail. area cat. Grimalkin, if only well fed and cared for, takes a pleasure Like beauty she is fair but false; whereas your in purification. landlady, though desperately deceitful, is also dirty; or, if perchance in person pure, preserves the average by employing the filthiest of abigails. There are of course to be found here and there brilliant exceptions-females of honour and refined feeling, who treat their lodgers as friends, not as foes, and provide things wholesome in the sight of all men. They exist, however, in anything but profusion: so much so, that the typical lodger, who has suffered many things in the vain search after the comforts of a home under the roof-trees of others, may regard them as mere figments of an exuberant imagi-For one prize in the lodging-house lottery you may assuredly draw at least ninety-nine blanks.

Pluticulus of course, who has got thirty thousand pounds caged in the Funds, and is under no special obligation to toil or spin, when he migrates with his Pluticula and the Pluticules of the nursery to the sea-board can afford 'drawing-rooms' in houses where, up-stairs, there is an imitation of luxury, albeit, if Pluticula only dared penetrate the arcana of the infernal regions, she would never again taste a mouthful that issued therefrom. The Pluticules, however, are lucky people, and can afford to buy the best. Most of us have not the privilege of being the creditors of the nation, but, on the contrary, are compelled to labour for the meat that perisheth in some manner more or less degrading and disagreeable. Consequently to us coin of the realm assumes a horrible significance, and we dislike parting with it about

as much as if it were a life-belt, and we happened to be wrecked on the Kentish Knock. Hence our experience is of humbler diversoria, such as a Pluticule would pass by with a sniff of the nostril, and Plutus, divine Plutus—gifted though he be, according to the verdict of toadyism, with eyesight superior to Turner, Millais, ay, by Jove, Raffaelle—would not even see.

N'importe. People who drive in gilt coaches do not come in for the fun of the fair. If you care to know what is going on in the world, you must drop down to the level of humanity and learn to be a cad. After all, when you're once sound asleep, or, for the matter of that, immersed in the perusal of a good novel, what does it signify? You forget your surroundings. Whilst, if victuals chance to be scarce, your digestion regains somewhat of the elasticity of childhood, and even a potato becomes a luxury.

It is in lodgings, then, of the second class that you will encounter character. Let us hazard a description.

A house situate in the wilds of Pimlico, rather Westminster way The landlady—most grandiloquent of noun substantives -we will term Mrs. Pink. She was in early life, before her figure assumed a resemblance to that of Queen Anne, a scullery-maid in a nobleman's family. Her bun-like charms attracted the Mercury of the household, who deceased shortly after the fruition of his romance, leaving Mrs. Pink with a brace of brats—and nothing. Now the aristocracy is squeezable. My lady, compassionating the widow, set her up in this Pimliconian domicile; whereupon Mrs. Pink, by way of proving her appreciation of this superfluous generosity, promptly gave a bill of sale on the furniture, and spent the proceeds on liquor and dissipation. At the time when we occupied this good woman's first floor she was in considerable pecuniary difficulty, albeit every room in her house was let. Bills of sale require, like circuit-leaders, constant refreshing; hence Mrs. Pink not only enforced clockwork regularity in payments, but even went to the length of demanding her rent in advance.

We shelled out. Yet, O what misery it all was! Mrs. P. of course, with the wretched spawn of poor defunct Pink, occupied the subterranea. In her household duties she was assisted by such a slut, so ignorant, so unclean, so odorous, that one longed for a cow, an ass, a sheep, a pig, or even a good wholesome badger, to wait at table in preference to this specimen of 'fallen' humanity. The two garrets were tenanted by City clerks, whereof one was sober, but addicted to chemical experiments; the other chronically intoxicate. This latter gentleman in his cups usually turned off the gas, and then turned it on again; so that if we did not explode, it was not from want of forethought on his part. The gas, by the way, though a strongish scent, was far preferable to the varied stenches evolved in the course of his experiments by the sober clerk, who we some-

times wished might fuddle himself into forgetfulness of such combinations of physical science as take the skin off your nose. The second floor contained a student, or rather a peripatetic philosopher. No one ever saw that man; he never came in, and assuredly he never went out. His very existence was as much of a conundrum to us as the yolk of the egg was to poor George the Third. We could not make out how he got there. All that was intelligible in him might be summed up in the expression, perpetual motion—Ambulavit, et æternum ambulabit. Indeed, if it had not been for the soporific influence of the escaped gas, nobody would ever have enjoyed a wink of sleep, owing to the treadmill overhead.

We have reserved as a bonne bouche the parlour people. They were a triad, consisting of (a) a man, (b) his wife, (c) a young lady (?) to whom the man was peculiarly attentive. The round of wrong enacted below our feet may be thus summarised. would take to the theatre the young lady, leaving his wife behind; latish in the evening he would return with her in a cab, very much inebriate. Then the injured wife ventured to remonstrate: whereupon, in the language of the 'Bells of St. Michael's Tower,' 'Richard Penlake a crab-stick would take,' and wallop his ill-starred spouse The shindies thus occasioned were indeed terrific. till she howled. In vain we threatened Mrs. Pink that such disreputable proceedings would eliminate our humble name from her list of lodger's. Penlake had money; he made it worth the woman's while to tolerate him; and therefore to all our objurgations she turned a deaf ear. At last a little scene brought matters to a climax.

Mr. Penlake had been observing the chief festival of the Christian year with that rigorous attention to the discipline of turkey and plum-pudding exacted by ecclesiastical custom, and had, moreover, settled these edibles with several rummers of punch. Then he grew playful, and, assuming the crab-stick, whacked Mrs. Penlake noisily.

Having performed this marital duty accurately well, he next turned with maudlin gravity to the young lady, who had blandly witnessed the flagellation of her rival, volunteering, by way of apology,

'Polly, my dear, I hope I don't disturb you!'

This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Poor illused Mrs. Penlake's spirit rose to the occasion. Seizing the nearest article of offence, she made at her lord with all the aggressiveness of despair. Whereupon ensued such a mêlée as baffles description. The furniture was smashed; so, thank goodness, was Mr. Penlake's head. Miss Polly came in for a broken nose. The police were called in, and the Penlakes en bloc ejected.

As for ourselves, we wished that we had committed some minor criminal offence, so that we might have enjoyed the quiet comfort of a Christian Christmas in a respectable and well-ordered gaol.

### 'THREE FOR A WEDDING'

O, THE summer sky may be soft and blue,
But brighter and softer and deeper of hue
Are the eyes of my darling so fair and true!
Thus blithely treading
I mused. Nor less lightly my way I took,
On spying—fair omen!—in woodland nook
Three magpies chattering over a brook—
'Three for a wedding.'

'Ho, fool!' In the distance he up and spoke,
Our village simple with hateful croak,
Forth stepping from under a canker'd oak,
Whose branches spreading
Hung fruitless. 'O, folly to call her "mine!"
Poor birds are wiser. She is not thine,
For another bridegroom they gather to sign—
Three for a wedding.'

He grinn'd and nodded, but ended his tale;
For with arm uplifted, with brow all pale,
I turn'd and strode hastily down the vale,
Fierce tears a-shedding;
And my heart went out in a bitter cry,
That the love and the hope of a life must die;
But the pyots chuckled and pass'd me by—
'Three for a wedding.'

What matters it now, for the tale is old?
Yet I fain would tell it—it should be told
How sweetly she bore with my greeting cold,
With grief and dreading;
And how, months later, when leaves were red,
On the Sunday morning when we were wed,
Three magpies flew merrily overhead—
'Three for a wedding.'

R. F. HAWKSHAW.

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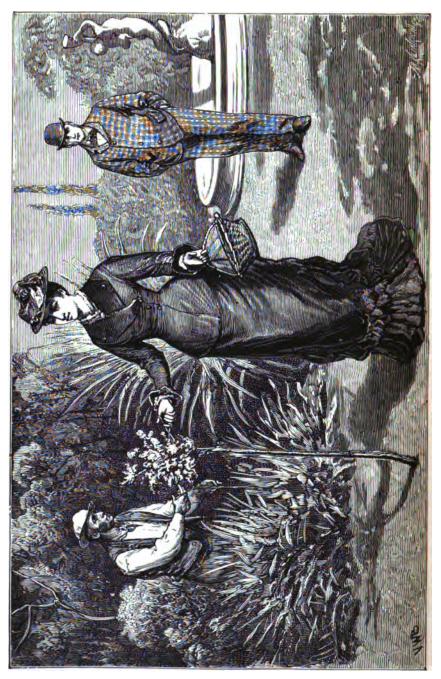
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## BELGRAVIA.

MAY 1876

### Juliet.

BY MRS. H. LOVETT-CAMERON.

### CHAPTER I. SOTHERNE COURT.

A FAIR flat valley wherein a river winds and winds like a streak of light; low rounded hills, purple with evening shadows, melting away into a yellow sky; russet woods, wide meadows, cows waiting at the farm gates, waggons jogging wearily homeward through the lanes, and over it all the golden hazy glow of an autumn sunset.

This is what Sotherne Court—red-gabled and many-windowed, standing aloft on the slope of the hills—looks down upon, whilst Juliet Blair, fair queen of the old house and of the many rich acres on every side of it, sits alone under the sycamore tree on the lawn.

She had thrown off her hat, and the slanting sunlight flickered through the drooping branches over the small dark head and among the rich laces and draperies of her dress. Here and there a yellow leaf had fluttered down upon her from the tree above. A little shower of rose leaves lay at her feet, and a sleepy bumble bee kept on buzzing backwards and forwards in front of her.

She had neither work nor book; her slight hands were clasped together idly upon her knee, and her face was turned towards the fast sinking sun across the valley below.

It needed not the warm glow of the sunshine to set that face alight.

The small mobile features, the rich curves of the sensitive mouth, the dark passionate eyes inherited from the young Spanish mother who has lain for years in the churchyard below, all speak of an ardent and impulsive nature; a nature that is intense in its capabilities of loving and suffering, yet with that strange mixture

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of weakness and recklessness, that is so often the fatal curse of an impetuous character.

Miss Blair of Sotherne Court is by no means an unimportant personage in her native county. For years she had been the idol of a doting father who, after the unhappy death of his young wife in the first year of their marriage, had centred every hope and thought in the child whose birth had cost its mother her life.

Miss Blair—she had never even in her baby days been called anything else—was in her father's eyes a person of the greatest importance; everything was done with a view to her comfort and in accordance with her wishes. From the time when she could speak her own mind—and it was pretty early in life that she learnt to do so—Mr. Blair would never so much as cut down a tree on the estate without consulting his little daughter. And even when, with that fatality which seems sometimes to take possession of old gentlemen, he suddenly brought home a second wife when he was nearly sixty—a person most unsuited to him in every way—he lost no time in making Mrs. Blair number two understand that she was to be but nominal mistress in the house that was eventually to belong to his young daughter.

Mrs. Blair sat for two years at the head of her husband's table, and then the old man died, and the day after the funeral Juliet, who at seventeen was fully conscious of her new dignities, sailed up to the post of honour at the dinner table, and motioned to her step-mother to take the place at the side which she had hitherto occupied herself; a position which Mrs. Blair was far too wise a woman to dispute.

For Juliet was now mistress where she had been but daughter. The house and all the broad lands were hers, and the widow was left with only a modest jointure, to which Juliet at once, in accordance with her father's wishes, added the request that she would make her home at Sotherne Court as long as it should suit them both to live together.

Mrs. Blair accepted the offer, as she herself would have said, 'in a right spirit.' People said it was an unjust will and hard upon her; but, if she thought so herself, she never said so, nor gave Juliet for a moment to understand that she was otherwise than perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

A guardian and trustee had been appointed to the young heiress; a certain Colonel Fleming, the son of an old college friend of Mr. Blair's, who held a military appointment at Bombay, where he had been for many years. When Mr. Blair died it was not considered necessary for Colonel Fleming to come home. A great many letters passed between him and Mr. Bruce, the family solicitor;

sundry papers and documents were sent out to him, which he duly signed and returned; and he wrote two letters to his young ward, whom he had not seen since she was five years old.

After that, Juliet heard nothing more of her guardian for several years, and privately hoped she might not in any way be troubled with him. But when she was twenty-one there were sundry alterations in rents, and transfers of leases, an accumulation of voluminous accounts, and so much business of different kinds to be gone through, that Mr. Bruce deemed it advisable to have the advice and presence of Miss Blair's guardian. He therefore wrote to Bombay and urged him to come home.

Colonel Fleming thought Miss Blair and the Sotherne estates an intolerable nuisance. He had lived in India for so many years that he had lost his interest in England, and he had no particular desire to come home. It had always been a puzzle to him why Mr. Blair, who had been very kind to him many years ago, when he was quite a young fellow just joining his regiment, should have chosen him, of all people, to be his daughter's guardian. As long as it entailed no trouble he did not so much object to it; but when it came to going home to look after all these things which he hardly understood—why, it was a nuisance, no doubt.

Still, if Mr. Bruce considered it essential, of course it must be done.

Mr. Bruce did consider it essential, and Colonel Fleming came home.

Colonel Fleming has now been at Sotherne Court a week, and for several hours in the day he and Mr. Bruce, who is also staying in the house, are closeted together over the accounts; after which the keeper is sent in with Miss Blair's compliments to ask whether they would like to shoot, and the two gentlemen go off together after the pheasants.

Perhaps it is the good shooting, or the quiet and peace of the country, or the luxurious ease of the comfortable old house, or perhaps it is all these things together and something more; but Colonel Fleming is inexpressibly charmed and soothed by the life at Sotherne Court, and he begins to hope these accounts and papers which he dreaded so much at first may last for many days longer. Juliet, from her seat under the walnut tree, catches sight of the sportsmen as they come wandering homewards: she puts on her hat and goes to meet them coming up the hill.

Hugh Fleming thinks he never saw a sweeter type of womanhood than this girl who is his ward, and yet almost a stranger to him. Juliet is in black, a rich heavy silk deeply trimmed with lace (she never wears any but the handsomest dresses), a white shady straw hat over her eyes, and a knot of scarlet geraniums in the front of her dress; and she comes towards him with a little timid smile that somehow cannot be usual to the imperious Miss Blair.

In after years, he often thought of her as he saw her that evening.

'Have you had good sport?'

She looked at her guardian; but little Mr. Bruce, fat and fussy, with his face very red from his walk, and his hat pushed far off his bald head, answered her.

'Capital, my dear, capital. Bigley wood is as good covert as ever; and I can tell you, Miss Blair, you have got a guardian who is a first-rate shot!'

'I am afraid I am wasting my time dreadfully, Juliet,' says Colonel Fleming, turning to his ward. He called her Juliet from the first in his letters, and he cannot drop it now. 'I have done no work to-day to speak of.'

'The more time you waste at Sotherne the better I shall be pleased, Colonel Fleming,' answers Juliet with her little gracious-hostess manner. 'Besides, in such lovely weather it would be a sin to be indoors. We shall not get many more such summer days in October.'

'No, indeed;' and then they saunter homewards together, the two men one on each side of her.

Mr. Bruce begins chattering about the people at the farm—Joe Biggs, who has set up a public in the village; Mary Hale, who wants to be infant schoolmistress—and a hundred other little local topics which he and Juliet have had in common for years, and which Miss Blair, as Lady Bountiful of the parish, is bound to be consulted about.

And Colonel Fleming walks on beside her in silence. He is a tall slight man with a soldierly upright figure that makes him look younger than he is; there are deep lines scored upon his face, and silver streaks in his dark hair and moustache; and he is tanned, and bronzed, and weather-beaten by the Eastern skies. He is by no means a handsome man, and yet the strongly marked features have a charm of their own that almost gives the effect of beauty.

Juliet keeps covertly glancing up at him from beneath her dark lashes, but, if he sees her, he does not seem to do so; his eyes are fixed on the house in front of them.

Juliet, imperious little queen, accustomed to have everything her own way, and tired, perhaps, of good Mr. Bruce and his voluble stories, gets impatient.

'You are very silent, my guardian; what are you thinking of?'

- 'Of you, my ward,' answers Hugh, turning to her with one of those sudden smiles that are so fascinating on a grave, stern face.
  - 'Of me!' she cries, flushing up with pleasure.
- 'Yes, of you, Juliet, as you were years ago when I was last at Sotherne, a little dancing, bright-eyed child, clinging on to your father's hand; an impetuous, self-willed little monkey you were, I remember. I was wondering if you were much altered now—now that I find you a tall stately young woman with ever so many lovers.'

'You will find me pretty self-willed still, especially about the

lovers!' said Juliet laughing.

'Ah! I have no doubt.'

And Juliet blushes rather prettily; she could hardly have told why.

And so they come to the house.

'How is your step-mother's headache?' asks Colonel Fleming, as he makes way for Juliet at the doorway.

'Oh! she won't appear again to-day,' answers the girl carelessly.

'She seems a great invalid.'

'Oh, dreadful!' says Juliet with a little sneer that her guardian thinks unbecoming.

Mrs. Blair does not appear at dinner-time, so the three dine and spend the evening alone; a quiet, peaceful evening. Old Mr. Bruce gets drowsy after the good cookery and the excellent wine, and dozes in his arm chair; Juliet, at her piano, crones over all sorts of dreamy old songs to herself one after the other; and Colonel Fleming sits bolt upright under the reading lamp at the centre table with a volume of Napier's 'Peninsular War' in his hand.

It is a book he professes to admire immensely; but, if anyone had taken the trouble to watch him narrowly this evening, it might have been seen that during a whole hour he has turned over only one page, and that his eyes were fixed over the top of the book on to the fire beyond.

Now and then, as some familiar old strain comes from the singer behind him, a sort of spasm of pain fleets rapidly across his stern features; but for that you might imagine his thoughts to be far away.

When thou art near me sorrow seems to fly;
And then I feel, as well I may,
That on this earth there dwells no one so blest as I!
But, when thou leav'st me, doubts and fears arise,
And darkness comes where all before was light.
The sunshine of my life is in those eyes,
And, when they leave me, all within is night.

sings Juliet with her rich contralto voice, trembling with a tenderness and passion of which she herself is hardly conscious.

Sing that again, says Colonel Fleming, as the last notes died away.

'Do you like it? I did not know you were listening: it is

one of my pets.'

And once more the sweet old song rings through the silent room.

But she is conscious of an audience this time, and does not sing it quite so well.

He does not interrupt her again.

Old days, old scenes, conjured up by the quaintly sweet song, are coursing rapidly through his brain. He sees once more through the mist of years a rose-covered cottage near a wood, an open window, himself a happy penniless lieutenant, leaning outside against the window sash, listening to a sweet voice that sings over again,

The sunshine of my life is in those eyes, And, when they leave me, all within is night.

And then, from the gloom towards him, advances a girl with blonde head and blue eyes; who stretches out her hands to him for one moment—one moment, and she is gone; and he sees only a face; the same face, but cold, and white, and impassive, as he saw her last—ah! God, in her coffin!

'Oh! my darling, my lost darling,' he murmurs below his breath.

And meanwhile Juliet at the piano is singing a joyful song about hope, and new life, and love that never dies.

She is nothing to him, this dark-eyed girl with her passionate voice; it is but a fictitious tie that has bound them together. He knows her not; she has no part in his life or his past; she does not even remind him in the faintest degree of that other who has gone, and whose memory is dearer to him than the sight of all other women; and yet there is a something in this imperious girl who is haughty to all others, and who yet can be humble with him,—who is a queen, and yet a child,—that attracts him wonderfully.

Colonel Fleming throws Napier's 'Peninsular War' impatiently aside, and walks across the room to the back of her chair.

'You have given me a great deal of pleasure by your singing, Juliet; a great deal of pleasure, and a great deal of pain.'

'Pain?' she asks, looking at him inquiringly; 'I am sorry for that; but if the pleasure has been greater than the pain——?'

'I don't say that: the pleasure was pain. The two are often so mixed up as to be indistinguishable. You are perhaps too young to know this.'

'No, indeed, I understand you perfectly. Was it my singing that pained you?'

'It recalled the past,' he answered almost sternly.

She looked at him a little curiously. What was his past? she wondered.

'It is that old song; I am very sorry; I will never sing it again.'

'Don't say that, my dear child. I told you the pain was pleasant; and I daresay I shall often ask you for it.' He laid his hand lightly on hers as he spoke, in a manner that was almost fatherly. Juliet hardly seemed to appreciate it; she rose and began putting away her music.

'If you will excuse me for saying so, I cannot help thinking that there is something morbid and unreal in trying to foster and cherish the memory of any sorrow that is long ago gone by. Is it not a proof that the trouble is a trouble no longer if we have to make a perpetual effort of conscience to keep it alive?'

She could not tell what made her say this, not kindly nor gently, but rather bitterly and hardly. Colonel Fleming looked at her for an instant in astonishment and then said somewhat coldly,

'If you were older you would perhaps understand better how some things in one's life are so part of one's self, that no effort is required either to forget or to remember them. I trust, my dear Juliet, that you may never find out this by experience.'

And then he turned away and took up his 'Peninsular War' again.

But afterwards, in the night, he lay awake long and thought much of her words. They had cut him like a knife when she had spoken them, but after all was she not perhaps right?

Was the memory of that dead girl indeed a living sorrow to him, or had the sorrowing for her become a habit, or almost, as Juliet had said, an effort of conscience? Colonel Fleming found that he could give no satisfactory answer to these questions.

Meanwhile Juliet had gone to bed in a great fit of indignation against herself. Why had she spoken so to him? Why had she shocked and startled him with her unkind and heartless words? What had possessed her?

She could not say. Only she knew that she felt a blind unreasoning hatred against that 'past' of which he had spoken so regretfully and yet so tenderly—a woman of course! What past can a man have in a woman's eyes that is not connected with her own sex?

But how foolish of her to imagine that her guardian, Colonel

Fleming, old enough nearly to be her father, had had no such past, no woman to love or to deceive him in all the years he had lived!

And after all what could it matter to her—Juliet Blair—whether this were so or not? She asked herself this last question several times over, and ended by answering it to herself very definitely before she went to sleep. Decidedly no; it did not matter to her in the least!

### CHAPTER II.

### MRS. BLAIR'S FIRST MOVE.

THE following morning found Colonel Fleming to all appearance hard at work in the library. The table was covered with papers and books,—big parchment deeds, account books of all sizes and kinds, letters, and note books full of pencil memoranda; and in front of them all sat Miss Blair's guardian, with his forehead leaning on one hand and a pen in the other.

Mr. Bruce had set him his task, and left him, if the truth must be told, to slink away and read the morning papers.

'It is quite necessary that you should understand the nature of all these things, my dear sir,' he had said; 'if you will kindly read these deeds very carefully through and go over the Holmby farm accounts, I will look in upon you by-and-by and see how you are getting on. I should only bewilder you if I were to stay with you now, and it is perfectly simple, my dear sir, perfectly simple, I assure you.' And with that Mr. Bruce had retired to the breakfast room with the 'Times' under his arm, chuckling inwardly at the prospect of a good hour's quiet read before he need in any way disturb the labours of the much bewildered Colonel.

The library windows opened on to the rose garden, and there among the late autumn roses, with a basket and a pair of big scissors, wandered Juliet, cutting a few flowers, and clipping off a dead leaf or a drooping branch here and there; not doing much good thereby, and considerably disturbing the peace of mind of the head gardener, who hovered about in the distance eyeing her suspiciously.

A pretty graceful figure in perpetual motion, passing and repassing continually before the library windows;—what a fatal distraction for a man with sheets of dry accounts spread out before him, for which the beauty of the morning alone made him feel sufficiently disinclined!

To do Miss Blair justice, she was quite unconscious of being watched. The writing table in the library was not close to the

windows, and there were muslin draperies in front of them which made it difficult to see plainly into the room from the sunshine outside, even if it had occurred to her to look that way, which it did not.

Juliet knew that she was handsome, but I doubt if she often thought about it. It was not as a beauty that she estimated herself. She had plenty of self-esteem, but it was as Miss Blair, the owner of Sotherne, whose position gave her a right to a voice in everything that concerned her native county, who indeed had a right to a vote—she often said indignantly—as much right as Squire Travers and Sir George Ellison, her neighbours on either side! If Juliet valued herself at all, it was in this light, and not at all on account of her beauty.

Moreover, Juliet was singularly simple-minded. She flitted about among her roses because she wanted some flowers for her drawing-room, and enjoyed cutting them herself, without a passing thought of what sort of a picture it was she made, as she moved to and fro before the windows.

Meanwhile Colonel Fleming was looking at her intently. graceful she was! How beautiful! And what a fine character was traced on that open fearless face! How wonderfully she interested him! Was it not certainly his duty as her guardian to study her character and learn to understand and know her thoroughly? Of course she was nothing to him personally; a mere child, albeit a most charming one. She had not the sweet gentleness of that other woman who was the love of his life, and who was dead; but after all that did not matter to him, for of course she was nothing, never could be anything to him of that kind: all that sort of thing was over and done with for him for ever. He was her guardian; simply and solely her guardian, and she his ward, his child almost. And surely it was most proper and most right that he should try and win her affection and confidence, in order that he might obtain that influence over her which her poor father would certainly have wished him to exercise.

Just at this point of his reflections there came shambling across the lawn towards Miss Blair a tall, loosely built young fellow about three-and-twenty. He had fair, straight hair, and blue eyes, in one of which was stuck an eye-glass, and a pale but not bad-looking face, with fairly good features set in a little straw-coloured frame of young whiskers.

He came and stood behind Juliet as she bent over her rose bushes, looking very nervous and shy, and didn't seem to know quite what to do with his arms and legs.

'Hallo, Cis!' she said, turning round suddenly upon him; 'I

didn't see you. How are you?' And she put out two fingers to him.

Cecil Travers took the fingers, pressed them adoringly between both his hands, and bent over them in speechless worship.

- 'Home for your holidays, Cis?' said Juliet, unconcernedly snipping off a rose with her disengaged hand and not looking at him as she spoke.
- 'Holidays! You mean vacations!' answered the youth rather indignantly; 'why, what are you thinking of, Juliet? Don't you know that I have left Oxford for good now? I have been in Scotland shooting lately,' he added rather grandly.

'Oh, ah! yes, I forgot,' said Juliet, coolly going on with her snipping and clipping.

He stood by her for a minute or two in silence, watching her.

- 'Have you nothing to say to me at all, Juliet? Here have I been away two months, and I thought you would be glad to see me back, and you don't speak to me, you don't even look at me!'
- 'I am very sorry, Cis; I am sure I don't mean to be unkind to you; what shall I say to you? I hope you have enjoyed yourself—how is your father? and have you brought any message from Georgie? and—why, Cis!' turning upon him and looking at him for the first time full in the face, 'why how your whiskers have grown!'

Now, if there is anything a young man of three-and-twenty, who has left college and considers himself in every way a man, hates, loathes, and detests, it is to have remarks made upon his improved looks, height, or hirsute adornments, especially when, as in this case, the remark is made laughingly by the object of his affections, whom he worships and adores, and to whom he has been in the habit of writing the most passionate and despairing love sonnets, sitting up late every night composing them for the last two years, and then burning them in the candle before getting into bed.

Juliet, fair object of all my hopes and fears, For whom I nightly shed these bitter tears, Low bowed beneath thy feet I lie, Smile once upon me, or I die—

ran the last of these productions. Luckily Juliet had never seen any of them, or how she would have laughed!

And now this divinity for whom he said he shed tears nightly, and under whose feet he was supposed to be stretched at full length occasionally, looked at him with those great deep eyes of hers, which in another epic poem he had compared to the stars of heaven, and told him deliberately that his whiskers had grown!

'If you can't find anything better than that to say, I'd better go,' he said, turning away with a very red face.

- 'My dear Cis, don't be so silly;' and she held out her hand to him, which, of course, he seized upon, and came back close to her at once.
- 'If you won't stare at me in that lackadaisical way, I shall have plenty to say to you, and of course I am delighted to see you back. Here! hold my basket for me, and then I can go on with my roses and talk at the same time. Now, let me see; what news have I? Oh, you know my guardian is here?'
- 'So I heard. What a nuisance!' said Cis, quite restored to felicity, and following her about with the basket in both hands.
- 'Not at all,' said Miss Blair with dignity; 'I like Colonel Fleming very much.'
- 'You didn't think you would before he came, and I suppose he is a stupid, dried-up old fogey.'
- 'Nothing of the sort,' answered Juliet sharply, with an indignant flush on her face,—she could hardly have told why. 'Colonel Fleming is a most charming man, and I won't hear him spoken of disrespectfully; and, Cis, if you can find nothing to say but what is rude and disagreeable—Here! give me the basket.'
- 'Oh, Juliet, Juliet! don't be angry with me; don't take the basket away; I'll say anything you like'—and between them the basket rolled to the ground, spreading the roses about on the lawn. Cis took the opportunity of catching hold of Juliet's hand and pressing it eagerly, whilst she burst out laughing at his agitated and piteous countenance.

And Colonel Fleming inside the library leant both elbows on the table and looked on frowning. 'Confound that impudent puppy!' he muttered. He could not hear their voices, but the acting of the little scene was pretty plain to him.

The young fellow's adoring looks, the way he bent over her hand, the half-quarrel, the reconciliation, and then the scuffle over the basket, and Juliet's merry laughter—it was all such a natural little love scene to be enacted between two young people on a sunny morning among the rose bushes.

'Ah, I see you are looking at them. Don't they make a pretty picture together?' said a soft suave voice behind his chair.

Colonel Fleming jumped up hurriedly. Behind him stood a lady in the most becoming of lilac cashmere morning gowns, softened by rich Valenciennes lace at the throat and wrists. She leant one elbow on the top of his arm-chair and held up a gold eye-glass through which she looked admiringly at the young people outside in the garden.

She might have been eight or nine and thirty, and had evidently been, indeed she still was, a very pretty woman. Her hair,

fair and soft, if a little thin, was billowed up into numberless curls and puffs above her smooth white forehead, and surmounted by the tiniest and daintiest Valenciennes lace cap. Her complexion was of that indescribably delicate transparency which suggests irresistibly the presence of rose powder and veloutine; her eyes, blue and large, although a little cold and hard, were traced round their lids with a dark line which surely nature alone could never have drawn there; and her lips were of that brilliant coral hue which no young blood of twenty ever gave; in a word, we all know the sort of woman—a beautiful make-up—the details were revolting, but the whole effect was enchanting.

'Such a pretty picture!' said this lady, again referring to the couple in the garden, who by this time had moved off nearly out

of sight.

'Mrs. Blair! good morning. I hope your headache is better to-day,' said Colonel Fleming, as he jumped up with a start that

was almost guilty.

'A little better, thanks,' she answered, with a resigned sigh, sinking down into a low arm-chair. 'I am a sad sufferer, you know; the circumstances of my life have quite shattered my health—quite shattered!' she repeated, with a wan melancholy smile.

'Indeed, I am very sorry you have such bad health,' answered he, not knowing quite what form of sympathy was expected of him.

'However—ah, well! I don't wish to speak of myself, Colonel Fleming; I never think of myself, as you well know. It was of that dear child we were speaking—our child, I might almost call her, might I not?' and here Mrs. Blair looked up at him with a smile that was almost seraphic.

The Colonel bowed stiffly. It was but a few minutes ago that in his own thoughts he had called Juliet his child, and felt quite fatherly towards her; but that was before the appearance of that lovesick-looking youth; and, moreover, the notion of a joint property in her with Mrs. Blair was not altogether agreeable to him.

'You see how it all is with our dear child, don't you, Colonel Fleming?' continued Mrs. Blair.

'Indeed! I hardly know what you refer to.'

'Aha! sly man!' said the lady, tapping him sportively with her fan. 'Ah, you gentlemen always pretend to be so impassive in matters of love. Now love is my atmosphere, my life! I worship a love affair. To see two young hearts drawn together in pure confiding affection, is a sight to make angels weep with joy!' and here Mrs. Blair, to show her sympathy with the angels, applied the corner of her lace pocket-handkerchief to her eyes,

looking furtively at it afterwards to make sure that she had not rubbed off any of the bismuth.

Colonel Fleming pushed his hand into his trousers' pockets, stared at his own feet, lifted his eyebrows, and said, 'Ah yes; very true!' with the air of one who expects shortly to be hanged, after the manner of men in such embarrassing circumstances.

'So sure you would agree with me,' murmured the widow, with a sigh. 'You will feel, I am sure, what a comfort it must be to me to see everything going on so well with my darling Juliet and dear Cecil Travers—so suitable in every way; in position, in fortune, in mind, and in age—don't you think it a great thing for people to be well-matched in age, Colonel Fleming?' and here she glanced up at him with a little cunning look in her cold blue eyes.

'Certainly, Mrs Blair; but you yourself—'

'Ah, don't speak of my unhappy life! pray spare me allusions to my widowed state. It is because, alas, I felt the discrepancy myself; because, because—'! Here a gentle fit of sobs interrupted her, and she retired again behind her handkerchief.

'My dear Mrs. Blair!' remonstrated Hugh Fleming, feeling more and more ill at ease. 'I am sure I am quite distressed to

have recalled anything painful; pray, forgive me.'

'Say no more, dear friend,' said the lady, holding out a white hand towards him, which common politeness forced him to hold for a moment in his own. 'Say no more; I know your good heart, I can appreciate the delicacy of your sentiments: but to return to our beloved girl. Is it not a comfort to think that a husband is already found for her; one who is so suitable to her, so desirable in every way, and so devoted to her, so devoted to her?'

'Am I to understand, Mrs. Blair, that your step-daughter is engaged to this Mr.—Mr. Travers?' said Colonel Fleming, with a cold stiffness which he in vain attempted to conceal.

Again Mrs. Blair looked up at him with a quick sly glance of curiosity.

'Well, not engaged exactly,' she resumed, looking down again and smoothing out the soft folds of her dress. 'I suppose to say engaged would perhaps be rather premature; but the dear children understand each other thoroughly. Cecil is most eager, dear fellow, but Juliet is a little coy and uncertain as yet. Of course girls are always timid in such cases, as I was myself, I well remember!' with a little sigh over the recollection.

'Ah, then Juliet is not quite so devoted as the young man!' said Hugh, with a little smile.

'Now, now, Colonel, you mustn't be hard on the dear child. No lack of tenderness and heart there, I can assure you. But girls

ought to hang back a little, and it has been so long planned and arranged for her—her dear father was so anxious, and settled it all long ago with old Mr. Travers—and he spoke of it on his deathbed, he did indeed, almost with his dying breath; and the properties adjoining and all make it so very important—and Mr. Bruce and I of course have always felt it our duty to place it before her, and we do hope, Colonel Fleming, that we may count upon your support and influence in this matter, as you know she must have your consent before she marries. I do hope you will not let any little dislike you may feel to the scheme stand in the way of her dear father's last wishes.'

'I, my dear madam! what can you be thinking of? I have no dislike whatever to any scheme for Miss Blair's happiness; my only wish is to do what is best and most desirable for her; what other object could I possibly have?'

'Thanks, thanks, dear friend,' murmured Mrs. Blair, again putting forth her hand, which Colonel Fleming was again obliged to take; it was a very pretty hand, as he could not help noticing as he bowed over it. Poor woman, she seemed very devoted to Juliet's interests, and if she was a little affected and gushing, why, was it not a sweet feminine failing? And then she was a pretty woman still, in spite of the pearl powder and rouge, a very pretty woman; a graceful figure too, he further reflected. And so he did not feel very hard-hearted towards her, although she had managed to worry him considerably about Juliet. After all, said Hugh Fleming to himself impatiently, what did it matter to him, as long as the boy was steady, and fond of her, and a suitable match, as no doubt he was? That was all he, Colonel Fleming, had to do with She might possibly be worthy of better things, but then women are always fond of throwing themselves away. Nine out of ten clever women are fools in that one matter alone, the matter of the men they marry. If Juliet had set her heart on this lanky youth, and her father had wished it, and her step-mother and Mr. Bruce also were in favour of it-why, there seemed nothing more left for him to do but to set the bells a-ringing and to give her away with And then one comfort of it would be that his a smiling face. guardianship would be over, and he would go back again to India, and wash his hands of the whole business for ever. Yes, it was much the best thing for everybody concerned, and would simplify matters very much for himself.

And then he roused himself with a half impatient sigh to listen to Mrs. Blair, who was still going over the many advantages of the match.

'He has known her all her life, you know, and so thoroughly

understands and appreciates the dear girl; and, being the only son, of course he comes into whatever money there will be as well as the property. The daughters have their mother's fortune. Nice clever girls the Miss Travers are, and so fond of darling Juliet—they make quite a sister of her already; indeed, the whole family are ready to welcome her with open arms. I am so glad to have had this talk with you, Colonel Fleming, and to have secured your sympathy in the matter. I felt so sure that your admirable good sense would make you take the same view of the subject that I do; though I fear you don't care so much for the sentiment of love as I do, you naughty, heartless, matter-of-fact man!' and here Mrs. Blair again brought her fan playfully into action.

'I certainly am not given much to thinking about love affairs, if that is what you mean, Mrs. Blair,' said Colonel Fleming good-temperedly. 'The position of a father to a full-grown young woman is a new one to me.'

'Ah, yes; and you so thoroughly put yourself into the place of her dear father, don't you, Colonel Fleming? So nice of you!' and again went that covert glance up at him from those sharplooking eyes. This time Colonel Fleming caught the look, and it set him thinking.

Had this pretty passée beauty, with her silly gushing affection and her civil speeches to himself, any double meaning in all that she was saying? Was she cloaking a secret enmity under the guise of friendship and frankness? or, gracious heavens! had she read him better even than he could read himself?

And through all the tanned bronze of his weather-beaten face Colonel Hugh Fleming turned red at the bare idea of what she might have seen, or might have fancied that she had seen, of his innermost thoughts.

### CHAPTER III.

### THE TRAVERS FAMILY.

RATHER more than three miles distant from Sotherne Court stands Bradley House, the residence of Mr., Mrs., Master, and the Misses Travers. It is a long, low, irregular, white building, with no architectural beauty, and in a very dilapidated condition indeed. The mouldy plaster is peeling off the walls in many places, the window-sashes and door-frames have been guiltless of paint for years, the garden is weed-grown and uncared for, and chickens and dogs wander alike unreproved over the once trim Italian parterre in front of the drawing-room windows. In a word, the general appearance of the house is poverty-stricken and neglected. And

yet Squire Travers is not at all a poor man; he has a good moderate fortune derived from a small but compact property, which if it does not show quite the same high standard of model farming as do the adjoining acres of his wealthier neighbour, Miss Blair, is still fairly cared for and productive. Moreover his wife has a few thousands of her own, quite enough to portion off his unmarried daughters comfortably. There is no reasonable cause why the plaster and paint should be dropping off the outside of the house unheeded and unrepaired, nor why the Turkey carpet in the dining-room should be threadbare and the stairs carpetless, nor why the whole of the antiquated mahogany furniture should be dropping to pieces unmended all over the house.

No reasonable cause I have said—no; but there was a cause, and many people, including Mrs. Travers herself, and also her son Cecil, and her daughter Mary, considered the cause a very unreasonable one indeed.

For Squire Travers kept the hounds, and for a man of small property and moderate means to divert those moneys which should by rights have been spent on the paperer, the painter, the upholsterer, and the cabinet-maker, upon hounds and horses, huntsmen and whip's wages, and compensations to farmers, was felt by sundry members of his family to be a grievance indeed. But old Thomas Travers had kept the hounds for years, as his father had done before him, and he often said he would starve himself and his family on bread and water sooner than give them up.

If you will go round to the stables at the back of the house you will see a very different state of things. There in the red tiled courtyard, kept as clean and neat as the deck of a yacht, numerous grooms and stable-boys are bustling backwards and forwards in and out of the long rows of stalls and loose boxes which take up two sides of the square; no lack of paint and plaster here! The stalls are light and airy, the woodwork is polished till it glitters, the horses are sleek and shiny, and in good condition; all is life, and brisk business, and order; and Mr. Davis, the stud groom, swaggers about superintending everything and everybody, with his hands in his trousers' pockets, a straw in his mouth, and a villanous-looking but perfectly bred bulldog at his heels—'for all the world like a dook!' as says an admiring under-housemaid, who worships him adoringly at a distance.

If I were to take you on to the kennels, a mile and a half off, you would see the same story; buildings in first-rate repair, with all the most modern improvements carried out to perfection. The stables, the huntsman's house, the kennels themselves, everything in apple-pie order; and meanwhile the Squire's wife catches her

foot in that hole in the carpet every time she goes into her bedroom.

The decorations of the entrance hall indicate sufficiently well the predominating influence in the household. Hunting crops, spurs, bits, fox brushes, heads, and pads, arranged in artistic patterns, literally line the walls, while a glimpse through the open door of the Squire's study reveals the same style of ornament relieved by hunting and sporting pictures all over the walls of that most cosylooking apartment-for there is no such room for comfort and ease and luxury in any house, large or small, as the master's 'den.' Here resort all the members of the family when they desire a little peace and enjoyment; when they want to fly from the practising of Maria's scales and Czerny's exercises on the drawing-room piano, or from the squalls and shouts of the children's games along the passages on a wet day, or from the stiff decorum of the lady visitors in the morning room. Here are comfortable chairs on which, unreproved, you may repose your feet if you feel so disposed, even if your boots are heavy or bespattered with mud; here you may smoke your pipe or drink your brandy and soda, resting your glass as you do so on the carpet at your feet with no dread of rebuke before your eyes; here you may snooze away a Sunday afternoon over the last new novel or the 'Sporting Gazette,' perfectly safe from the inroads of the Reverend Snuffles, who, even if he chance to visit the house during the afternoon, is not likely to venture into the inner sanctum and to catch you at it.

Squire Travers's 'study' was a haven of rest after this sort. Many a long hour had he and his eldest daughter, Georgie, spent together in this cosy retreat whilst the other members of the family were employed in other and more homely avocations; the Squire dozing over his pipe, and Georgie writing letters in her father's name to the farmers, or settling in her own mind all about next month's meets, or often merely conning over the ordnance map and going over again in imagination some famous run of last season.

For Georgie Travers was her father's own daughter. A slight, wiry-looking little creature, with a blonde head and small baby features; she had, nevertheless, a perfect seat on a horse, a wrist as strong as a man's, and the most indomitable pluck and nerve of any lover of hunting who followed her father's hounds. And keen! Why, there are no words to describe Georgie's keenness in the noble sport. Wind or rain, early or late, nothing stopped her—she was often out and away on winter mornings long before her mother opened her eyes to her wearisome life, or her sister Mary had turned round shivering in her bed to ring for her cup of tea,

Near or far, wet or fine, no meet was ever without Georgie Travers's slight figure, well balanced on her lean thorough-bred chestnut, or on one of her father's big blood-looking bays, being seen close to the Squire's side when the hounds threw off.

Georgie is her father's secretary and right hand, much to her mother's disapprobation, who thinks her whole conduct unfeminine and indecorous, and often suggests that she should superintend her younger sister's practising.

'Let her alone,' growls the Squire; 'let her alone, ma'am. I want the girl myself;' and so Mrs. Travers is silent, and Georgie takes up her abode in her father's study as a matter of course.

The father and daughter are there now very busy together. The Squire is in top-boots and breeches; winter and summer alike, he is always attired in these symbols of his profession, from morning until dinner time, Sundays excepted, when he dons a frock-coat and sombre-looking trousers in which his burly form looks sadly out of place.

He sits leaning upon the table with both arms and dictating to his daughter, who is scribbling away for bare life. Cub-hunting begins next week, ushering in the more solemn rites of November, and pretty well every farmer in the county has to be written to. Georgie has a beagle pup secreted on her lap under the table, which she keeps furtively stroking with her left hand, whilst a superannuated hound, blind with one eye and otherwise considered past his work, and so delivered over unto her as a pet, lies close to her feet on the folds of her dress.

- 'And I propose drawing the Colebrook woods at six o'clock on Monday morning'—reads Georgie aloud after her father's dictation—'and should be glad to know if you have many foxes in your own covers,' continues the Squire.
- 'Why, not one, papa; you know there's not one! I believe that old Briggs has trapped them all the summer,' cries Georgie excitedly.
- 'Shouldn't wonder—surly old brute—but we must write civilly all the same; he knows very well what to expect if he has trapped them, that's all. Make haste and sign it; that's the last. Why do you keep that pup on your lap, child? It is covered with fleas—puppies always are. What a girl you are!' adds the father admiringly, as Georgie stands up and hugs the puppy, perfectly regardless of its reputed inhabitants.
- 'You ought to have been a boy; can't make out why you weren't. Ah, well!' with half a sigh, 'go and find that big milk-sop brother of yours, my girl; I must give him a dressing now, I suppose!'

Georgie lingers a minute putting away her writing-case.

'Don't be hard on poor Cis, papa; you know he isn't strong.'

'Not strong? Pooh, fiddlesticks! What business has a great big fellow six foot high to be ailing like a girl? I've no patience with such nonsense; d' ye ever hear me say I'm not strong. D' ye ever find me not able to be up and after the hounds at six o'clock in the morning? d' ye ever hear me say I've got a headache or a pain in my chest or my back? and I'm sixty and your brother's twenty-three! All d—nonsense I say,' said the Squire working himself into a rage; 'it's all your mother's molly-coddling has done it, I say; and a precious muff she's made of him. A son of mine who can't ride to hounds—ugh!' and the supreme contempt and disgust expressed in the final ejaculation made Georgie laugh in spite of her sympathy with her brother.

Mr. Travers, like many people blessed themselves with robust health and a strong constitution, regarded delicate people with the utmost contempt. It was almost a sin in his eyes not to be able to walk and ride like an athlete. It was a perpetual sore to him that his only son should be weak and unequal to physical exertion; he could not understand it, nor, indeed, believe in it at all, and nothing would persuade him that Cecil was not in a great measure shamming.

He was never tired he said; he was never ill. If he did feel a little squeamish in the morning, why, a pint of home-brewed ale and a good gallop across the fields put him all straight in half an hour! And then, when Cecil shook his head and doubted whether such remedies would have the smallest effect in his case, his father lost his temper and turned round and swore at him for a coward and a fool.

Good-hearted little Georgie took her brother's part and tried to shield him from the Squire's wrath; but she was not free herself from a certain amount of pitying contempt, born of a perfectly strong body and a healthy appetite, for the delicate indolence of her brother. Like the Squire, she thought Providence had made a mistake, and that she ought to have been the son and Cis the daughter.

She went away to find her brother, with the puppy still in her arms, and Chanticleer, the one-eyed, toothless old hound, following close at her heels.

'Cis, papa wants you in the study.'

Master Cis was lying down on the sofa in his mother's morning room, with an open book of Browning's poems on his chest, his eyes closed, and his arms thrown up behind his head. Mrs. Travers, a pale washed-out-looking woman in drab, sat hard by, dic-

tating a French story to Flora, aged twelve, whilst through the open door in the adjoining room could be seen the second daughter Mary, who, reclining on an arm-chair with a novel, was supposed to be looking after the four-finger exercises of little Amy, the youngest child.

- 'One, two, three, four—time, child!' in Mary's cross sharp voice.
- 'Ils n'avaient plus—l'espérance—de sauver—les naufragés'—slowly drawls out Mrs. Travers from the table.
- 'Do you think they will be saved?' asks Flora breathlessly, as she writes down an agonising description of the shipwreck of an unhappy pair of lovers.
- 'Not a doubt of it; and they'll marry and live happy ever after!' breaks in Cis, reassuringly from the sofa, thereby showing that he has been listening too.

And then comes Georgie with those awful words, 'Papa wants you in the study, Cis.'

- 'Your brother has a headache, Georgie,' says Mrs. Travers deprecatingly.
- 'Well, it will be much quieter for him there than here with all the lessons going on.'
- 'I wish you wouldn't bring those nasty, dirty dogs here,' says her mother; but little Flora has slipped down from her chair and thrown both arms round Chanticleer's neck, and is kissing him rapturously on his blind eye.
- 'Flora, you naughty child! come back to your chair this minute. I declare, Georgie, you quite smell of the stables, and I wish you wouldn't come in here disturbing your sisters at their lessons.'
- 'The dogs aren't a bit dirty, mamma; they are as clean as Christians, and, if I do smell of stables, it's not at all an unwholesome smell; and I've only come to give papa's message to Cis,' says Georgie, answering her mother's complaints categorically, as she does the farmers, in the letters she is accustomed to docket and answer.
  - 'Come along, Cis; make haste!'
  - 'My poor boy!' sighs his mother, looking fondly after him.
  - 'What's it about, Georgie; is he angry with me?'
- 'Not more than usual,' she answers laughing, as they go out together; 'but, if you would just try and please him sometimes, he would be so much gentler to you. Now, why didn't you go out and see them exercising that new mare this morning, as he asked you to do at breakfast, instead of lounging on the sofa with that trash?' she added, pointing contemptuously to the poetry book.

- 'Browning is not trash,' said Cis indignantly; 'and what do I care about new mares.'
- 'Ah, what indeed!' said Georgie turning off from him with a sigh; and, passed out through the open hall door, she took the slanting path across the paddock that led towards the kennels, with Chanticleer and the 'pup' following boisterously and noisily behind her.

As to Cis, he waited for a moment irresolute outside the study door before he could summon up courage to turn the handle.

He stood very much in awe of his father, and these private conferences in that cosy little room were apt to be of an unpleasant and stormy nature.

The Squire's first words to-day, however, were in an amicable tone of voice.

'Well Cis, my boy, have you been to have a look at that young mare?'

And Cis had the presence of mind to answer, 'Not yet, sir.'

'Ah! well, didn't suppose you would; but it isn't of that I wanted to speak; light your pipe, boy; ah! no, by the way, you don't smoke; makes you feel sick, don't it, eh?'

This was another sore point with the Squire, that his only son should not be able to smoke a quiet pipe with him; and he was for ever pretending to forget it in order to remind him of this deliquency and to sneer at him about it. Cis certainly had something to bear from his father, too; he got very red and did not answer.

- 'Well, Cis, I want to talk to you about Miss Blair.'
- 'About Miss Blair, sir?' stammered Cis, getting redder still.
- 'Yes; you know very well my wishes on that subject; its high time you made the running there, you know. She's a fine girl, and a good girl, and goes deuced well across country, too—not to be compared to your sister, of course; but still she goes very straight, very straight indeed, and the property fits in very well; a fine property and a nice girl,—I don't know what more you want, Cis.'
- 'I assure you, sir, my dearest wish, my greatest joy would be to induce Juliet to be my wife. I love her dearer than I love my life.'
- 'Ha, ha, ha!' interrupted the Squire, with the most irreverent guffaw; 'ha, ha! don't go rehearsing the proposal to me, my dear boy. What's the good talking of love and sentiment and bosh to me? That's all humbug. What does all that signify? The girl has got a pot of money and a fine property—you needn't say any

more about it. Go in and win if you can, and make haste about it. I want you to do something to the old place when I'm gone, Cis. I don't suppose you'll keep the hounds. Ah, it's a pity Georgie wasn't the boy! But if you marry Juliet Blair you'll live at Sotherne and have a little money to do up the old house for your mother and the girls. It's a fine match for you, my boy.'

'I don't think of that for one moment, sir, I assure you,' said the boy, rather hotly.

'Well, then, you should think of it, Cis. Why, what do you suppose I married your mother for?'

Love, sir, I trust,' answered Cis, gravely and reproachfully.

'Not a bit of it. It was for that slip of land that dove-tailed into Cosby farm down on the flat. I'd always coveted that land, and then she had her bit of money besides, and I don't say, Cis, that I didn't like and esteem her, and she's a very good woman in her way; but I might have liked and esteemed her ever so much, I shouldn't have married her if it hadn't been for the land and the money. Lord bless you! An eldest son must think of these things; there's no particular virtue in marrying for love; it's all the same in a dozen years' time whatever you've married for; only, when you've got a something substantial besides, it makes everything pleasanter for life.'

Cis looked very grave during this philosophical enunciation of his father's views upon marriage in general and his own in particular, and again signified his perfect willingness, nay, eagerness, to marry Miss Blair for herself and her money combined.

'Only,' he added sadly, 'there's one thing against it. I'm afraid she won't have me.'

'And shouldn't be a bit surprised if she wouldn't,' said the old man, veering round unreasonably. 'Why don't you ride, and hunt, and go about like other men, and do something to make a sensible girl proud of you, instead of wasting your life doing nothing?'

'I haven't done badly at college, sir,' remonstrated Cis; 'and it is not my fault I am not strong enough for violent out-door exercise. You forget I took a first in mods.'

'What's mods?—a parcel of Latin and Greek, and rubbish! I'd rather you'd have broken your collar-bone over a stiff bit of timber! Not strong, indeed! No wonder you're not strong—always molly-coddling over the fire with a book, and never clearing your brains out with a good gallop across country. I sent you to college to make a man of you, sir, not to learn a pack of Latin and stuff!'

At which novel view of University education Cis raised his

eyebrows and laughed.

'Ah you may laugh, but you'll laugh the wrong side of you're mouth when you find Miss Blair won't have you. There'll be Wattie Ellison and a dozen more after her before you—'

'Why, Wattie Ellison is Georgie's lo---' began Cis.

'Nothing of the sort,' thundered the Squire. 'Don't go coupling your sister's name with an idle young pauper like that though sure he can ride a bit. Georgie knows better. But you'll let Juliet Blair slip through your fingers if you're not sharp. Go and propose, boy; don't be a fool. Girls always come round at last if a man keeps on worry, worry, worry at 'em. Turn 'em round; keep their heads straight at the fence; if they refuse the first time, turn 'em round and send 'em at it again,' he added not unkindly.

'I am most anxious to marry her, sir, but she has refused me dozens of times;' and Cis got very red and looked intensely miser-

able.

His father burst out laughing. 'Ah! she has, has she? Well, I am not surprised; but you were a boy then; now you've come home for good and you're a man—as much of a man as I suppose you ever will be,' he added, ruefully; 'and I wish you to go as often as you can to Sotherne and do your very best to succeed. Do you understand me, Cis?'

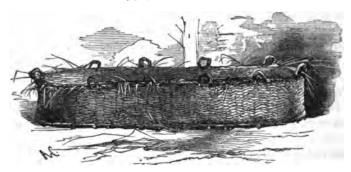
'Certainly, father,' answered the youth with alacrity; and then he went round to his father's chair and laid his hand on his. 'I wish I could ride better, father; perhaps if I marry Juliet you

will forgive me that.'

'All right, my boy; we'll square it off so. God bless you!' and the old man gave the young one a grip of his hard old hand. He was a little touched in spite of himself; and after Cis had left the room he sat still looking after him out of the window, as the boy wandered idly on to the drive in front of the house. 'Well, well, I suppose he and I don't understand each other; he's a well-intentioned lad too, and Juliet Blair would improve him wonderfully; but he's an awful sawney. Dear, dear! what a pity, what a sad pity, Georgie wasn't the boy!'

# What has become of Lord Camelford's Body?\*

BY CHARLES READE.



This question comes not from an Old Bailey counsel squeezing a witness; 'tis but a mild enquiry addressed to all the world, because the world contains people, who can answer it, but I don't know where to find them.

To trace a gentleman's remains beyond the grave would savour of bad taste and Paul Pry: but I am more reasonable; I only want to trace those remains into a grave, if they have reached one.

Even that may seem impertinent curiosity—to his descendants: but, if it is impertinent, it is natural; to permit the world a peep at strange facts, and then drop the curtain all in a moment, is to compel curiosity, and this has been done by Lord Camelford's biographers. To leave his Lordship's body for seven or eight years in a dust-hole of St. Anne's Church, packed up—in the largest fish-basket ever seen—for exportation, but not exported, is also to compel curiosity; and this has been done by his Lordship's executors.

Now this last eccentric fact has come to me on the best authority, and, coupled with the remarkable provisions for his interment, made by Camelford himself, have put me into such a state, that there is no peace nor happiness for me, until I can learn what has become of Lord Camelford's body—fish-basket and all.

\* This story is entered by the author at Stationers' Hall, and cannot be translated, por reproduced in English newspapers, without leave.

I naturally wish to reduce as many sensible people as I can to my own intellectual standard in re Camelford. I plead the fox, who, having lost his tail—as I my head—was for decaudating the vulpine species directly.

To this bad end then I will relate, briefly, what is public about Lord Camelford, and next what is known only to me and three or four more outside his own family.

Eccentricity in person, he descended from a gentleman, who did, at least, one thing without a known parallel; he was grandson, or great-grandson, of Governor Pitt.

I beg pardon on my knees, but being very old and infirm, and in my dotage, and therefore almost half as garrulous as my juvenile contemporaries, I really must polish off the Governor first. He had a taste and knowledge of precious stones; an old native used to visit him periodically, and tempt him with a diamond of prodigious size. I have read that he used to draw it out of a piece of fusty wool, and dazzle his customer. But the foxy Governor kept cool and bided his time. It came: the merchant one day was at low water, and offered it cheaper. Pitt bought it, and this is said to be the only instance of an Anglo-Saxon outwitting a Hindoo in stones. The price is variously printed—man being a very inaccurate animal at present—but it was not more than 28,000l. Pitt brought it home, and its fame soon rang round Europe. A customer offered; the Regent of France, price 135,000l. But France, at that time, was literally bankrupt. The representative of that great nation could not deal with this English citizen, except by the way of deposit, and instalment. Accordingly a number of the French crown-jewels were left in Pitt's hands, and four times a year the French agents met him at Calais, with an instalment, until the stone was cleared and the crown-jewels restored.

Thenceforth the Pitt diamond was called the Regent diamond. It is the second stone in Europe, being inferior to the Orlop, but superior in size to the Koh-i-nor; for it was from the first a trifle larger, and the Koh-i-nor, originally an enormous stone, was fearfully cut down in Hindostan, and of late years has been terribly reduced in Europe; all the better for the Amsterdam cutters.

Every great old stone has cost many a life in some part of the world or other. But in Europe their vicissitudes are mild. Only the Sancy has done anything melodramatic.\*

<sup>\*</sup> The Sancy, a beautiful pear-shaped diamond of, say, 53 carats, was first seen on the hand of Philip, Duke of Burgundy. Very likely he imported it, for he dealt habitually with the East for curiosities. It passed, after some generations, to a Portuguese prince; he wanted to raise money on it, and sent it to Paris, instructing the messenger to swallow it, if he found himself in trouble or danger. It did not reach Paris, and this news was sent to Portugal. The French authorities were

The Regent has always gone quietly along with France. No Bourbon took it into exile at the first revolution. No republican collared it. Napoleon set it in his sword-hilt, but it found its way back to the royal family who originally purchased it: from them to the second Emperor, and again to this Republic.

I am afraid, if I had been Bony, I should have yielded to etymology, and boned it, before I went on my travels; but delicacy prevailed, and it has only run one great risk; in 1848, it lay a week in a ditch of the Champ de Mars, after the sack of the Tuileries; but was given up at last, under a happy illusion that it was unsaleable. As if it could not have been broken up, and the pieces sold for 100,000l. The stone itself is worth 800,000l. I am told.

From the importer of this diamond descended a Mr. Pitt, who was made a peer in 1784. He had a son Thomas, born in 1775, to astonish his contemporaries whilst he lived, and torment one with curiosity seventy years after his death.

Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford, was a character fit for the pen of Tacitus or Clarendon: a singular compound of virtues and vices, some of which were directly opposed, yet ruled him by turns; so that it was hard to predict what he would do or say on any given occasion; only the chances were it would be something with a strong flavour, good or bad.

In his twenty-nine years, which is only nine years of manhood, he assassinated an unresisting man, and set off to invade a great and warlike nation, single-handed; wrenched off many London door-knockers, beat many constables, fought a mob single-handed with a bludgeon, and was cudgelled and rolled in the gutter, without uttering a howl; mauled a gentleman without provocation, and had 500l. to pay; relieved the necessities of many, and administered black eyes to many. He was studious and reckless; scientific and hare-brained; tender-hearted, benevolent, and barbarous; unreasonably vindictive, and singularly forgiving. He lived a humorous ruffian, with flashes of virtue, and died a hero, a martyr, and a Christian.

To those, who take their ideas of character from fiction alone, such a sketch as this must seem incredible; for fiction is forced to suppress many of the anomalies that Nature presents. David was even more unlike David, than Camelford varied from Camelford, and the chivalrous Joab, who dashed, with his life in his hand, into

appealed to; they searched diligently, and found a foreigner had been assassinated and buried in a French village. They exhumed him, opened him, and found the Sancy in his stomach. Subsequently the stone belonged to James the Second. It then passed through various French hands. I think it has now gravitated to the Rothschilds.

the camp of the Philistines, to get his parched general and king a cup of water, afterwards assassinated a brother soldier in a way so base and dastardly as merited the gibbet, and the lash to boot. Imagine a fellow hanging in chains by the road-side, with the Victoria Cross upon his bosom, both cross and gibbet justly earned! Such a man was, in his day, the son of Zeruiah.

But were Fiction to present such bold anomalies, they would be dubbed inconsistencies, and Horace would fly out of his grave at our throats, crying,

amphora cœpit Institui, currente rotâ cur urceus exit?

It is all the more proper that the mixed characters of history should be impressed on the mind, lest in our estimate of mankind, men's inconsistencies should be forgotten, and puzzle us beyond measure some fine day, when they turn up in real life.

Lord Camelford went to school first at Berne in Switzerland, and passed for a thoughtful boy; thence to the Charterhouse. He took a fancy to the sea, and was indulged in it; at fourteen years old he went out as midshipman in the 'Guardian' frigate, bound for Botany Bay with stores. She met with disasters, and her condition was so desperate that the Captain (Riou) permitted the ship's company to take to the boats. He himself, however, with a fortitude and a pride British commanders have often shown in the face of death, refused to leave the ship. Then Camelford and ninety more gallant spirits stood by him, to share his fate. However they got the wreck—for such she is described—by a miracle, to the Cape, and Camelford went home in a packet.

Next year, 1791, he sailed with Vancouver in the 'Discovery.' But, on this voyage, he showed insubordination, and Vancouver was obliged to subject him to discipline. He got transferred to the 'Resistance,' then cruising in the Indian seas, and remained at sea till 1796, when his father died, and he returned home to take his estates and title.

Though years had elapsed, he could not forgive Captain Vancouver, but sent him a challenge. Vancouver was then retired, and in poor health. The old captain appealed to the young man's reason, and urged the necessity of discipline on board a ship of war; but offered to submit the case to any flag officer in the Navy, and said that, if the referee should decide this to be a question of honour, he would resign his own opinion, and go out with Lieutenant Camelford.

Camelford, it is to be feared, thought no sane officer would allow a duel on such grounds; for he did not accept the proposal, but waited his opportunity, and meeting Vancouver in Bond

Street, insulted him, and tried to strike him. The mortification and humiliation of this outrage preyed upon Vancouver's heart, and shortened the life of a deserving officer, and very distinguished navigator.

Little more than a year after this, Camelford took a very different view of discipline, and a more sanguinary one. Yet there was one key to these discordant views, his own egotism.

Peers of the realm rose fast in the King's Service, at that date, and Camelford, though only a lieutenant, soon got a command: now it so happened that, on a certain day at the end of the year 1797 or beginning of 1798, his sloop, the 'Favorite,' and a large vessel, the 'Perdrix,' Captain Fahie, were both lying in English harbour, Antigua. Fahie was away at St. Kitts, and Peterson, first lieutenant, was in charge of the 'Perdrix.' Lord Camelford issued an order, which Peterson refused to obey, because it affected his vessel, and he represented Fahie, who was Camelford's senior. There were high words, and threats of arrest on Camelford's part: and twelve of Peterson's crew came up armed. It is not quite clear whether Peterson sent for them; but he certainly drew them up in line, and bared his own cutlass. Camelford immediately drew out his own marines, and ranged them in a line opposite Peterson's men. He then came up to Peterson, with a pistol, and said, 'Lieutenant Peterson, do you still persist in not obeying my orders?'

'Yes, my Lord,' said Peterson, 'I do persist.'

Thereupon Camelford put his pistol to Peterson's very breast, and shot him dead on the spot. He fell backward, and never spoke nor moved.

Upon this bloody deed, the men retired to their respective ships, and Camelford surrendered to Captain Matson, of the 'Beaver' sloop, who put him under parole arrest. He lost little by that, for the populace of St. John's wanted to tear him to pieces. A coroner's jury was summoned, and gave a cavalier verdict that Peterson 'lost his life in a mutiny,' the vagueness of which makes it rather suspicious.

Camelford was then taken, in the 'Beaver' sloop, to Martinique, and a court-martial sat on him, by order of Rear-Admiral Hervey. The court was composed of the five Captains upon that Station, viz. Cayley, Brown, Ekers, Burney, and Mainwaring, and the judgment was delivered in these terms, after the usual preliminary phrases: 'The court are unanimously of opinion that the very extraordinary and manifest disobedience of Lieutenant Peterson to the lawful commands of Lord Camelford, the senior officer at English harbour, and his arming the ship's company, were acts of

mutiny highly injurious to his Majesty's Service; the court do, therefore, unanimously adjudge that Lord Camelford be honourably acquitted.'

Such was the judgment of sailors sitting in a secret tribunal. But I think a judge and a jury, sitting under the public eye, and sitting next day in the newspapers, would have decided somewhat differently.

Camelford may or may not have been the senior officer in the harbour; Peterson, in what pertained to the 'Perdrix,' was Fahie, and Fahie was not only Camelford's senior, but his superior in every way, being a Post-Captain.

'Lieutenant' is a French word, with a clear meaning, which did not apply to Camelford but did to Peterson; lieu tenant, or locum tenens. I think, therefore, Peterson had a clear right to resist in all that touched the 'Perdrix;' and that Camelford would never have ventured to bring him to a court-martial for mere disobedience of his order. In the court-martial Camelford is called a Commander; but that is a term of courtesy, and its use, under the peculiar circumstances, seems to indicate a bias: he had only a lieutenant's grade, and in that grade was Peterson's junior.

Much turns, however, on the measure and manner even of a just resistance; and here Peterson was primâ facie to blame. But suppose Camelford had threatened violence! The thing looks like an armed defence, not a meditated attack. For the lieutenant in command of the 'Favorite' to put a pistol to the lieutenant in charge of the 'Perdrix,' and slaughter him like a dog, when the matter could have been referred, on the spot, by these two lieutenants, to their undoubted superiors, was surely a most rash and bloody deed. Indeed opinion in the Navy itself negatived the judgment of the court-martial. So many officers, who respected discipline, looked coldly on this one-sided disciplinarian Camelford, that he resigned his ship, and retired from the service, soon after.

### THE CAPRICCIOS OF CAMELFORD.

It was his good pleasure to cut a rusty figure in his Majesty's Service. He would not wear the epaulettes of a commander, but went about in an old lieutenant's coat, the buttons of which, according to one of his biographers, 'were as green with verdigris as the ship's bottom.' He was a tartar, but attentive to the comforts of the men, and very humane to the sick. He studied hard in two kinds, mathematical science, and theology: the first was to make him a good captain, the second to enable him to

puzzle the chaplains, who, in that day, were not so versed in controversy as the Jesuit fathers.

Returning home, with Peterson's blood on his hands, he seems to have burned to recover his own esteem, by some act of higher courage than shooting a brother officer à bout portant: and he hit upon an enterprise that certainly would not have occurred to a coward. He settled to invade France, single-handed, and shoot some of her rulers, pour encourager les autres. He went to Dover and hired a boat. He was sly enough to say, at first, he was bound for Deal; but after a bit says our adventurer, in tones appropriately light and cheerful, 'Well, no: on second thoughts, let us go to Calais: I have some watches and muslins I can sell there.' Going to France in that light and cheerful way, was dancing to the gallows: so Adams, skipper of the boat, agreed with him for 10l., and went directly to the authorities. They concluded the strange gentleman was going to deliver up the island to France; so they let him get into the boat, and then arrested him. They searched him, and found him armed with a brace of pistols, a dagger, and a letter of introduction, in French.

They sent him up to the Privy Council, and France escaped invasion that bout.

At that time, as I have hinted, it was a capital crime to go to France from England. So the gallows yearned for Camelford. But the potent, grave, and reverend seniors of his Majesty's Council examined him, and advised the King to pardon him under the Royal Seal: they pronounced that 'his only motive had been to render a service to his country.' This was strictly true: for whoever fattens the plains of France with a pestilent English citizen, or consigns him to a French dungeon for life, confers a benefit on England; and this benefit Camelford did his best to bestow on his island home. It was his obstructors who should have been hanged. His well-meant endeavour reminds one of the convicts' verses bound for Botany Bay:—

True patriots we, for be it understood We left our country, for our country's good.

The nation that had retained him, against his will, now began to suffer for its folly, by his habitual breaches of the public peace.

After endless skirmishes with the constables, my Lord went into Drury Lane Theatre, drunk, with others of the same kidney, broke the windows in the boxes, and the chandeliers, and Mr. Humphries's head; Humphries had him before a magistrate. Camelford lied, but was not believed; and then begged the magistrate to ask Mr.

Humphries if he would accept an apology: but word-ointment was not the balm for Humphries, who had been twice knocked down the steps into the hall, and got his eye nearly beaten out of his head. He prepared an indictment, but afterwards changed his tactics judiciously, and sued the offender for damages. The jury, less pliable than captains in a secret tribunal, gave Humphries a verdict and 500l. damages.

After this, Camelford's principal exploits appear to have been fights with the constables, engaged in out of sport, but conducted with great spirit by both parties, and without a grain of permanent ill-will on either side. He invariably rewarded their valour with gold, when they succeeded in capturing him. When they had got him prisoner, he would give the constable of the night a handsome bribe to resign his place to him. Thus promoted, he rose to a certain sense of duty, and would admonish the delinquents with great good sense and even eloquence; but spoiled all by discharging them. Such was his night work. In the day-time he was often surprised into acts of unintentional charity and even of tender-heartedness.

#### HIS NAME A TERROR TO FOPS.

He used to go to a coffee-house in Conduit Street, shabbily dressed, to read the paper. One day a dashing beau came into his box, flung himself down on the opposite seat, and called out, in a most consequential tone 'Waitaa, bring a couple of wax candles, and a pint of Madeira, and put them in the next box.' En attendant he drew Lord Camelford's candle towards him, and began to read. Camelford loured at him, but said nothing.

The buck's candles and Madeira were brought, and he lounged into his box to enjoy them. Then Camelford mimicked his tone, and cried out 'Waitaa, bring me a pair of snuffaa.' He took the snuffers, walked leisurely round into the beau's box, snuffed out both the candles, and retired gravely to his own seat. The buck began to bluster, and demanded his name of the waiter.

'Lord Camelford, sir.'

'Lord Camelford! What have I to pay?' He laid down his score, and stole away without tasting his Madeira.

### HIS PLUCK.

When peace was proclaimed, the suffering nation rejoiced. Not so our pugnacious peer. He mourned alone; or rather cursed, for he was not one of the sighing sort. London illuminated. Camelford's windows shone dark as pitch. This the London citizen always bitterly resents. A mob collected, and broke his windows. His first impulse was to come out with a pistol, and shoot all he

could; but, luckily, he exchanged the fire-arm for a formidable bludgeon. With this my Lord sallied out, single-handed, and broke several heads in a singularly brief period. But the mob had cudgels too, and belaboured him thoroughly, knocked him down, and rolled him so diligently in the kennel, while hammering him, that, at the end of the business, he was just a case of mud with sore bones. All this punishment he received without a single howl; and it is believed would have taken his death in the same spirit; so that we might almost say of him,

He took a thousand mortal wounds As mute as fox 'midst mangling hounds.

The next night his windows were just as dark: but he had filled his house with boarders, as he called them, viz. armed sailors; and, had the mob attacked him again, there would have been much bloodshed, followed by a less tumultuous, but wholesale hanging day. But the mob were content with having thrashed him once, and seem to have thought he had bought a right to his opinions. At all events they conceded the point, and the resolute devil was allowed to darken his house and rebuke 'the weakness of the people' in coming to terms with Bony.

#### THE PITCHER GOES ONCE TOO OFTEN TO THE WELL.

Camelford had a male friend, a Mr. Best, and, unfortunately, a female friend, who had once lived with this very Best. This Mrs. Simmons told Camelford that Best had spoken disparagingly of him. Camelford believed her, and took fire. He met Best at a coffee-house, and walked up to him and said, in a loud aggressive way, before several persons, 'I find, sir, you have spoken of me in the most unwarrantable terms.' Mr. Best replied, with great moderation, that he was quite unconscious of having deserved such a charge.

'No, sir,' says Camelford, 'you know very well what you said of me to Mrs. Simmons. You are a scoundrel, a liar, and a ruffian!'

In those days such words as these could only be wiped out with blood; and seconds were at once appointed.

Both gentlemen remained at the coffee-house some time, and, during that time, Mr. Best made a creditable effort: he sent Lord Camelford a solemn assurance he had been deceived, and said that, under those circumstances, he would be satisfied if his Lordship would withdraw the expressions he had uttered in error. But Camelford absolutely refused, and then Best left the house in considerable agitation, and sent his Lordship a note. The people of

the house justly suspected this was a challenge, and gave information to the police: but they were dilatory, and took no steps until it was too late.

Next morning early, the combatants met at a coffee-house in Oxford Street, and Best made an unusual and indeed a touching attempt to compose the difference. 'Camelford,' he said, 'we have been friends, and I know the unsuspecting generosity of your nature. Upon my honour you have been imposed upon by a strumpet. Do not insist on expressions, under which one of us must fall.'

Camelford, as it afterwards appeared, was by no means unmoved by this appeal. But he answered, doggedly, 'Best, this is child's play: the thing must go on.' The truth is, Best had the reputation of being a fatal shot, and this steeled Camelford's pride and courage against all overtures.

The duel was in a meadow behind Holland House. The seconds placed the men at thirty-nine yards, and this seems to imply they were disposed to avoid a fatal termination if possible.

Camelford fired first, and missed: Best hesitated, and some think he even then asked Camelford to retract. This, however, is not certain. He fired, and Lord Camelford fell at his full length, like a man who was never to stand again.

They all ran to him; and it is said he gave Best his hand, and said, 'Best, I am a dead man. You have killed me: but I freely forgive you.'

This may very well be true; for it certainly accords with words he had already placed on paper the day before, and also with words he undoubtedly uttered in the presence of several witnesses soon after.

Mr. Best and his second made off, to provide for their safety; one of Lord Holland's gardeners called out to some men to stop them: but the wounded man rebuked him, and said he would not have them stopped; he was the aggressor; he forgave the gentleman who had shot him, and hoped God would forgive him too.

He was carried home, his clothes were cut off him, and the surgeons at once pronounced the wound mortal: the bullet was buried in the body, and the lower limbs quite paralysed by its action. It was discovered, after his death, embedded in the spinal marrow, having traversed the lungs. He suffered great agonies that day, but obtained some sleep in the night. He spoke often, and with great contrition, of his past life, and relied on the mercy of his Redeemer.

Before the duel he had done a just and worthy act. He had YOL XXIX. NO. CXV.

provided for the safety of Mr. Best, by adding to his will a positive statement that he was the aggressor in every sense: 'Should I therefore lose my life in a contest of my own seeking, I solemnly forbid any of my friends or relations to proceed against my antagonist.' He added that if the law should, nevertheless, be put in force, he hoped this part of his will would be laid before the King.

I have, also, private information, on which I think I can rely, that, when he found he was to die, he actually wrote to the King with his own hand, entreating him not to let Best be brought into trouble.

And, if we consider that, as death draws near, the best of men generally fall into a mere brutish apathy—whatever you may read to the contrary in Tracts—methinks good men and women may well yield a tear to this poor, foolish, sinful, but heroic creature, who, in agonies of pain, and the jaws of death, could yet be so earnest in his anxiety that no injustice should be done to the man who had laid him low. This stamps Camelford a man. The best woman, who ever breathed, was hardly capable of it. She would forgive her enemy; but she could not trouble herself, and worry herself, and provide, moribunda, against injustice being done to that enemy; c'était mâle.

I come now to the particulars, which have caused me to revive the memory of Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford, and I divide these particulars into public and private information.

#### THE PUBLIC INFORMATION.

The day before his death, Lord Camelford wrote a codicil to his will, which, like his whole character, merits study.

He requested his relations not to wear mourning for him, and he gave particular instructions as to the disposal of his remains in their last resting place. In this remarkable document he said that most persons are strongly attached to their native place, and would have their remains conveyed home, even from a great distance. 'His desire, however, was the reverse; he wished his body to be conveyed to a country far distant, to a spot not near the haunts of men, but where the surrounding scenery might smile upon his remains.'

He then went into details. The place was by the Lake of St. Pierre, in the Canton Berne, Switzerland. The particular spot had three trees standing on it. He desired the centre tree to be taken up, and his body deposited in the cavity, and no stone nor monument to mark the place. He gave a reason for the selection, in spite of a standing caution not to give reasons. 'At the foot

of that tree,' said he, 'I formerly passed many hours in solitude, contemplating the mutability of human affairs.'

He left the proprietors of the trees and ground 1,000l. by way of compensation.

#### COMMENT ON THE PUBLIC INFORMATION.

Considering his penitent frame of mind, his request to his relations not to go into mourning for him may be assigned to humility, and the sense that he was no great loss to them.

But, as to the details of his interment, I feel sure he mistook his own mind, and was, in reality, imitating the very persons he thought he differed from. I read him thus by the light of observa-Here was a man, whose life had been a storm. At its close he looked back over the dark waves, and saw the placid waters his youthful bark had floated in before he dashed into the surf. Eccentric in form, it was not eccentric at bottom, this wish to lay his shattered body beneath the tree, where he had sat so often an innocent child, little dreaming then that he should ever kill poor Peterson with a pistol, and be killed with a pistol himself in exact retribution. That, at eleven years of age, he had meditated under that tree on the mutability of human affairs, is nonsense. Here is a natural anachronism and confusion of ideas. meditating on that subject as he lay a-dying; but such were never yet the meditations of a child. The matter is far more simple than all this. He, who lay dying by a bloody death, remembered the green meadows, the blue lake, the peaceful hours, the innocent thoughts, and the sweet spot of nature, that now seemed to him a temple. His wish to lie in that pure and peaceful home of his childhood was a natural instinct, and a very common one. Critics have all observed it, and many a poet sung it, from Virgil to Scott.

Occidit, et moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.

#### THE PRIVATE INFORMATION.

In the year 1858, I did business with a firm of London solicitors, the senior partner of which had, in his youth, been in a house that acted for Lord Camelford.

It was this gentleman who told me Camelford really wrote a letter to the King in favour of Best. He told me, further, that preparations were actually made to carry out Camelford's wishes as to the disposal of his remains. He was embalmed, and packed up for transportation. But, at that very nick of time, war was proclaimed again, and the body, which was then deposited, pro

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tempore, in St. Anne's Church, Soho, remained there, awaiting better times.

The war lasted a long while, and, naturally enough, Camelford's body was forgotten.

After Europe was settled, it struck the solicitor in question that Camelford had never been shipped for Switzerland. He had the curiosity to go to St. Anne's Church and inquire. He found the sexton in the church, as it happened, and asked him what had become of Lord Camelford.

'O!' said the sexton, in a very cavalier way, 'here he is.' And showed him a thing, which he described to my friend McLeod as an enormously long fish-basket, fit to pack a shark in.

And this, McLeod assured me, was seven or eight years after Camelford's death.

Unfortunately, McLeod could not tell me whether his informant paid a second visit to the church, or what took place between 1815 and 1858.

The deceased Peer may be now lying peacefully in that sweet spot he selected, and paid for. But I own to some misgivings on that head. In things of routine, delay matters little; indeed, it is a part of the system: but, when an out-of-the-way thing is to be done, oh, then, delay is dangerous: the zeal cools; the expense and trouble look bigger; the obligation to incur them seems fainter. The inertia of mediocrity flops like lead into the scale, and turns it. Time is really edax rerum, and fruitful in destructive accidents. Rectors are sometimes lawless; churchwardens deal with dustmen; and dead peers are dust. Even sextons are capable of making away with what nobody seems to value, or it would not lie years forgotten in a corner.

These thoughts prey upon my mind: and, as his life and character were remarkable, and his death very noble, and his instructions explicit, and the duty of performing them sacred, I have taken the best way I know to rouse inquiry, and learn, if possible,

WHAT HAS BECOME OF LORD CAMELFORD'S BODY.

Authorities. - 'Gentleman's Magazine,' Jan. 1798; 'Annual Register,' Feb. 25, 1798; 'Times,' Jan. 14, 1799; 'True Briton,' Jan. 17, 19, 21, 1799; Humphreys and Camelford, 'London Chronicle,' May 16, 18, 1799; 'Times,' May 17, 1799. 'Porcupine,' Oct. 8, 12, 1801; 'Times,' Oct. 9, 12, 17, 24, 1801; 'Morning Post,' March 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 26, 28, 1804; 'London Chronicle,' March 6, 8, 10, 1804; 'True Briton,' March 15, 1804; 'Annual Register,' 1804; 'Eccentric Mirror,' 1807; Letter from Rev. W. Cockburn, 'Morning Poet,' March 26, 1804; 'An Authentic Account of the late unfortunate Death of Lord Camelford, with an Extract from his Will, and some Remarks upon his Character, by the Rev. William Cockburn Hill, 1804. McLeod, deceased.'

## The Last Oracle.

(A.D. 361.)

#### BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

εἴπατε τῷ βασιλῆῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά ·
οὐκέτι Φοῦβος ἔχει καλύβαν, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην,
οὐ παγὰν λαλέουσαν · ἀπέσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

YEARS have risen and fallen in darkness or in twilight,
Ages waxed and waned that knew not thee nor thine,
While the world sought light by night and sought not thy light,
Since the sad last pilgrim left thy dark mid shrine.
Dark the shrine and dumb the fount of song thence welling,
Save for words more sad than tears of blood, that said:
Tell the king, on earth has fallen the glorious dwelling,
And the watersprings that spake are quenched and dead.
Not a cell is left the God, no roof, no cover;
In his hand the prophet laurel flowers no more.
And the great king's high sad heart, thy true last lover,
Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it to the core.

And he bowed down his hopeless head
In the drift of the wild world's tide,
And dying, Thou hast conquered, he said,
Galilean; he said it, and died.
And the world that was thine and was ours
When the Graces took hands with the Hours
Grew cold as a winter wave
In the wind from a wide-mouthed grave,
As a gulf wide open to swallow
The light that the world held dear.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy face was hidden,
And the lips and eyes that loved thee blind and dumb;
Song forsook their tongues that held thy name forbidden,
Light their eyes that saw the strange God's kingdom come.

Fire for light and hell for heaven and psalms for pæans Filled the clearest eyes and lips most sweet of song,

When for chant of Greeks the wail of Galileans

Made the whole world moan with hymns of wrath and wrong. Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they saw thee,

They that worshipped when the world was theirs and thine, They whose words had power by thine own power to draw thee Down from heaven till earth seemed more than heaven divine.

For the shades are about us that hover
When darkness is half withdrawn
And the skirts of the dead night cover
The face of the live new dawn.
For the past is not utterly past
Though the word on its lips be the last,
And the time be gone by with its creed
When men were as beasts that bleed,
As sheep or as swine that wallow,
In the shambles of faith and of fear.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,

Destroyer and healer, hear!

Yet it may be, lord and father, could we know it,

We that love thee for our darkness shall have light

More than ever prophet hailed of old or poet Standing crowned and robed and sovereign in thy sight. To the likeness of one God their dreams enthralled thee,

Who wast greater than all Gods that waned and grew; Son of God the shining son of Time they called thee,

Who wast older, O our father, than they knew.

For no thought of man made Gods to love or honour

Ere the song within the silent soul began,

Nor might earth in dream or deed take heaven upon her Till the word was clothed with speech by lips of man.

And the word and the life wast thou,

The spirit of man and the breath;

And before thee the Gods that bow

Take life at thine hands and death.

For these are as ghosts that wane,

That are gone in an age or twain;

Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,

They perish, but thou shalt endure;

Be their life as the swan's or the swallow,

They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Thou the word, the light, the life, the breath, the glory, Strong to help and heal, to lighten and to slay, Thine is all the song of man, the world's whole story; Not of morning and of evening is thy day. Old and younger Gods are buried or begotten From uprising to downsetting of thy sun, Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and forgotten, And their springs are many, but their end is one. Divers births of godheads find one death appointed, As the soul whence each was born makes room for each; God by God goes out, discrowned and disanointed,

But the soul stands fast that gave them shape and speech.

Is the sun yet cast out of heaven? Is the song yet cast out of man? Life that had song for its leaven To quicken the blood that ran Through the veins of the songless years More bitter and cold than tears, Heaven that had thee for its one Light, life, word, witness, O sun, Are they soundless and sightless and hollow, Without eye, without speech, without ear? O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear!

Time arose and smote thee silent at his warning, Change and darkness fell on men that fell from thee; Dark thou satest, veiled with light, behind the morning, Till the soul of man should lift up eyes and see. Till the blind mute soul get speech again and eyesight, Man may worship not the light of life within; In his sight the stars whose fires grow dark in thy sight Shine as sunbeams on the night of death and sin. Time again is risen with mightier word of warning, Change hath blown again a blast of louder breath; Clothed with clouds and stars and dreams that melt in morning, Lo, the Gods that ruled by grace of sin and death! They are conquered, they break, they are stricken, Whose might made the whole world pale;

They are dust that shall rise not or quicken Though the world for their death's sake wail. As a hound on a wild beast's trace, So time has their godhead in chase; As wolves when the hunt makes head, They are scattered, they fly, they are fled;

They are fled beyond hail, beyond hollo,
And the cry of the chase, and the cheer.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven beholden,
Even the sun, the shining shadow of thy face:
King, the ways of heaven before thy feet grow golden;
God, the soul of earth is kindled with thy grace.
In thy lips the speech of man whence Gods were fashioned,
In thy soul the thought that makes them and unmakes;
By thy light and heat incarnate and impassioned,
Soul to soul of man gives light for light and takes.
As they knew thy name of old time could we know it,
Healer called of sickness, slayer invoked of wrong,

Healer called of sickness, slayer invoked of wrong, Light of eyes that saw thy light, God, king, priest, poet, Song should bring thee back to heal us with thy song. For thy kingdom is past not away,

Nor thy power from the place thereof hurled;
Out of heaven they shall cast not the day,
They shall cast not out song from the world.
By the song and the light they give
We know thy works that they live;
With the gift thou hast given us of speech
We praise, we adore, we beseech,
We arise at thy bidding and follow,
We cry to thee, answer, appear,
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

## Miss Cushman: a Keminiscence.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

MISS CHARLOTTE SAUNDERS CUSHMAN, who died somewhat suddenly, February 18, 1876, at Boston, U.S. (where she was born in 1816), was an honour to the American stage, which she adorned by her great talents, unceasing industry, and high respectability of character in private life. After performing with Macready in the Northern States, in the year 1844, she came to England with her sister, in 1845, and appeared at the Princess's and Haymarket theatres, in the characters of Bianca ('Fazio'), Romeo (to her sister's Juliet1), Lady Macbeth, Beatrice, Rosalind, Mrs. Haller, Lady Teazle, Julia ('the Hunchback'), Juliana ('the Honeymoon'), &c. She returned to the United States in 1849, and made a sensation as 'Meg Merrilies,' a character which she afterwards played, with great success, in this country, both in London and the principal provincial towns. I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Cushman on many occasions, and of witnessing several of her perfermances. I not only saw her 'Meg Merrilies' from the 'front of the house,' but went with her to the rehearsal of the part; and, just before her performance, saw her behind the scenes ready dressed for the character. As may be remembered by those who saw her, Miss Cushman was a fine-looking, largely-made woman; and, therefore, to convert her appearance to that of a skinny old hag was a triumph of art. The needful painting, so as to show the sinews, muscles, and even the bones of the cheek, arms, and shoulders, through the withered and wrinkled skin, was the work of her female attendant, or 'dresser,' who had been with her for years, and was accustomed to 'make up' her mistress's face according to the required character, and in obedience to the instructions given to her. No character gave her more trouble in this respect than that of Meg Merrilies; and the painting of the neck, face, arms, and hands occupied her fully half an hour. Miss Cushman had thoroughly studied how the white, black, and other colours that were used might be best disposed with a view to the desired effect; and, in addition to her own continuous

<sup>\*</sup> Miss Susan Cushman was married in 1848 to Dr. James Sheridan Muspratt, F.R.S.E., of Liverpool, and died in 1859.

studies in this respect, she told me that she had received valuable hints from many celebrated artists. Certainly, the result of that half-hour's painting was wonderfully successful; and, when the lean and withered hag was first seen, standing on the summit of the rock, with fluttering dress and outstretched arms, the deception was complete; and it was scarcely possible for any one who had seen Miss Cushman as Lady Macbeth, to imagine that this was the same actress whose appearance as Meg Merrilies had so startled him. She told me that when she first assumed the character in the United States, it was by an accident. actress who was to have played the part was seized with illness a few days before the drama was announced for its first performance. and when everything was prepared for its representation. manager, in despair, appealed to Miss Cushman to play the part; and she consented, although she had barely time to study the character and learn the words. But, when the night came, and she suddenly made her appearance on the rock, 'then,' she said to me, 'the whole thing came upon me like an inspiration;' and the 'hit' that she made was most decisive. This was at the Park Theatre, New York, somewhere about the year 1840, where she was the 'stock actress,' and played in a variety of pieces; her sister, Miss Susan W. Cushman, also being in the same company. Remembering the success that she had made in this character, she re-assumed its impersonation in 1849, when she returned to the United States from England. On her second visit to this country, she played the character of Meg; and English audiences ratified the favourable verdict that had been pronounced by her own countrymen upon this most striking and masterly impersonation.

At the outset of her career, Miss Cushman had appeared as an operatic singer, making her début, at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, in the character of the Countess, in the English version of Mozart's Nozze di Figaro; and, although her loss of voice, while singing at New York, had prematurely compelled her to close her operatic career, yet her vocal powers were subsequently of considerable use to her in some of her characters. This was the case with her Meg Merrilies, where the prophetic verses relating to the heir of Ellangowan, and the crooning snatches of song put into the mouth of Meg, were delivered—I might say, chanted—by Miss Cushman with a 'creeping,' weird-like method, thoroughly in keeping with the character impersonated. Her entire performance of the part was a masterpiece of art, and left an impression upon the spectator not easily to be effaced. There is a great deal of music and singing in the dramatised version of Scott's

'Guy Mannering,' and Meg Merrilies is by no means the solitary Miscellaneous songs and ballads are freely introduced, in order to suit the individual performers. Julia Mannering generally displays her vocal dexterity in 'Softly sighs the voice of evening,' the scena from Oberon, 'Ocean, thou mighty monster,' or in any other song that she feels equal to delivering. The baritone gipsy growls away at 'The Wolf;' the gipsy women, in their scarlet cloaks and fanciful costumes, chorus 'The Chough and the Crow,' and the audience submit with resignation, and the strictest purist does not care to feel that any remarkable violence has been done to Sir Walter's novel. But, the more difficult enigma to be solved, is, How shall the great tenor sustain his character as Henry Bertram, and yet sing that new and popular drawing-room song which has been entrusted to the glorious advertisement of his matchless voice? It is managed in the following way. Mr. Sims Reeves sits at a table, looking very dejected. Dandie Dinmont, who is drinking, asks him to propose a toast or sentiment. dejected one is unequal to the effort, and has not, in his pocket, a copy of any publication that will help him in this convivial emergency. Dandie Dinmont, inspired, says 'If ye can't gie us a toast, ye can gie us a song, mon!' This electric touch brings the dejected one to his legs; he advances to the footlights; the fiddlers tune up; and the great tenor prepares to liberate his spirit of 'Will you love me now and then?' or 'Will you meet me up a tree, love, when the clock strikes nine?' or whatever other rubbish the music publisher may chance to have crammed down his throat. Of course this sort of thing is only tolerated in the provinces, or at an east-end metropolitan theatre. I remember seeing 'Guy Mannering,' at the Birmingham Theatre-where also I saw Miss Cushman's, 'Meg Merrilies.' It was during the time of the Crimean war; and Mr. Sims Reeves (who was performing in the 'dramatic opera,' together with his wife) had to come forward, in the way just described, and sing a music publisher's song, entitled 'What will they say in England?' which entirely depended on its fleeting popularity from its being introduced to the public by England's great tenor: and, from its being a socalled 'National Song' that related solely to Crimean doings. The delicious anachronism was overlooked by the audience, who loudly redemanded the song; whereupon Mr. Sims Reeves-I daresay with a just contempt for, and appreciation of, his hearerssang an entirely different song-'In this old chair my father sat; In this my mother smiled!' the said two chairs being represented by those of Bertram and Dandie Dinmont. But, the audience applauded as lustily as before, and would have listened with delight

to the 'Bay of Biscay,' or any other melody with which Bertram might choose to favour them.

It was in the rôle of Lady Macbeth that Miss Cushman made her debut as an actress; and, as in the case of 'Guy Mannering,' Shakespeare's tragedy is frequently produced with the accompaniment of Locke's music, given by 'Singing witches' and Hecate. The three speaking witches are usually performed by men, whose make-up and attire, 'so wither'd and so wild,' is, more or less, after the fashion of Miss Cushman's Meg. The late Mr. Atkins, before he had established himself as an actor on the London stage, and during the time that he was a leading performer at, and the stage manager of, the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, was an excellent representative of the first witch in 'Macbeth,' and was most artistically made-up for the character. Miss Cushman spoke warmly to me in his praise, on the same evening that I had seen her appear, as Lady Macbeth, on the Birmingham stage. The ambitious Thane was impersonated by Mr. Paumier, a most intelligent and gentlemanly man, who supported Miss Cushman and Miss Helen Faucit in many of their provincial engagements. But, Mr. Paumier was not only very tall, but also very thin; and, on the night of which I speak, the gods of the Birmingham gallery took a malicious pleasure in loudly making most uncomplimentary remarks on Macbeth's legs, adding thereto similarly rude speeches concerning a somewhat too pronounced movement of the facial muscles to which Mr. Paumier was addicted. It was cruel work. and the action of many of the chief scenes of the tragedy was greatly impaired, if not wholly ruined, by the unseemly conduct of the denizens of the gallery. Miss Cushman felt it acutelybut, chiefly, through honest indignation at Mr. Paumier's treat-He, poor man, felt it more acutely still; and, being very sensitive, and also (I understood) struggling against the depression arising from the inroads of consumption, could not summon up resolution to face the Birmingham gods on another night, but at once threw up his engagement, and left the leading tragedian of the company to support Miss Cushman in the round of characters in which she had been advertised to appear.

Another clever and versatile actor, who frequently supported Miss Cushman in her provincial engagements, was Mr. Coleman, who, when the late Mr. Oscar G. Rejlander, the celebrated photographer, lived at Wolverhampton, was so invaluable to him as a sitter in character parts. From seeing Miss Cushman's Meg Merrilies, Mr. Coleman conceived the idea of himself impersonating the character; and I was told that he did so with much skill. I

am not aware if any other actor has undertaken this rôle; nor do I know of any actress, except Miss Cushman, who ever appeared as Cardinal Wolsey, in Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII.' She played the part at Burton's New Theatre, New York, in November 1857; and, as in everything that she undertook, she invested the character with the results of deep study and great intellectual grasp. Five years before that, she had intended to retire from the stage; and, for what she then considered to be her final appearance, she chose the character of Meg Merrilies. This was at the Broadway Theatre, New York.

Miss Cushman, I believe, never appeared on the stage as Hamlet. I frequently endeavoured, both in conversation and in correspondence, to persuade her to add this great character to her Shakespearian impersonations, and to make it a worthy pendant to her Romeo. She promised to give it her due consideration; but, she expressed an idea that the character, as a whole, had 'too much repose and dreaminess' to suit itself to her peculiar powers: though, I think, it would have afforded ample scope for the masculine vigour and fire with which she could invest her impersonations. I reminded her that Mrs. Siddons—whose first appearance in Shakespeare's plays was, as I could show by an original play-bill, as Ariel, in 'The Tempest,' April 16, 1767, at her father's theatre, at the King's Head, Worcester, when she was only twelve years of age—not only had played Imogen, in 1802, when her male dress was 'exactly the strait or frock coat and trousers of our modern beaux; 'but, that one of her favourite impersonations in the provinces was the character of Hamlet. Mrs. Siddons frequently selected it for her benefit, though she never appeared in it on the London stage. Nor did Miss Cushman. It was in the year after she had performed with Mr. Macready, in the Northern States of America, that she first appeared, in 1845, at the Princess's Theatre, as Bianca, in Milman's tragedy of 'Fazio'-a part in which Miss O'Neill had been famous. Thus, the first lines she spoke on the London stage were those composed by an English clergyman; and, it may be noted that Miss Cushman was the lineal descendant of that Robert Cushman, the Englishman, who was one of 'the Pilgrim Fathers' to New England, and there preached the first sermon delivered by any of that company.

Towards the close of that year, 1845, 'Romeo and Juliet' had been produced at the Haymarket, with the two sisters Cushman in the two chief characters; and Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett, writing of this, in 'The Almanack of the Month,' February, 1846, and describing the scene at the doors of 'the little theatre,' said,

<sup>&#</sup>x27;But what's the attraction? Why thus do they rush, man?'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Don't you know? 'Tis to Romeo, played by Miss Cushman.'

And afterwards he mentions the resemblance between Miss Cushman and Macready.

What figure is that which appears on the scene? Tis Madam Macready—Miss Cushman, I mean.
What a wondrous resemblance! the walk on the toes,
The eloquent, short, intellectual nose—
The bend of the knee, the slight sneer on the lip,
The frown on the forehead, the hand on the hip;
In the chin, in the voice, 'tis the same to a tittle,
Miss Cushman is Mister Macready in little.
The lady before us might very well pass
For the gentleman, viewed the wrong way of the glass.
No fault with the striking resemblance we find,
Tis not in the person alone, but the mind.

The opinion of this accomplished critic was abundantly confirmed by the press; and the mental and histrionic powers of Macready were considered to be fully rivalled by the new American actress. In summing up his opinion of the early performances of 'Romeo and Juliet,' Mr. A'Beckett said,

Now, as for the acting—though 'tis not complete— It is, on the whole, a most exquisite treat. Miss Cushman and sister—the Friar, the Nurse, Have never been better, and often been worse; But, here, approbation, I fear, must be ended; The less that is said will the soonest be mended.

The article was illustrated by Richard Doyle with a small sketch of the two sisters in the Balcony scene, and by a full-length page-sketch of Miss Cushman as Romeo—a portrait pushed to the extreme verge of caricature. Far more satisfactory, and eminently graceful and powerful, was Sir John Gilbert's half-page rendering of the Balcony scene, in the pages of the 'Illustrated London News.'

I once saw Miss Cushman, in Kotzebue's dreary, yet effective, play, 'The Stranger.' We were talking about the performance when I called upon her the next morning; and she told me, that, in the early part of her career, she was playing the part in a certain theatre in the United States, when she was horror-struck at beholding two veritable little niggers led on to the stage, in that pathetic scene where Mrs. Haller is supposed to embrace her own children. It appears that the providing these little innocents was left to the care of the stage-manager, who, failing, at the last moment to procure white-skinned children, bridged over the emergency as well as he was able, by substituting darkies. As the audience did not manifest any emotions either of derision or displeasure, but accepted the matter calmly, and as a matter of course, Miss Cushman smothered her feelings as best she might,

and proceeded with the business of the scene. All went on well until the moment came when the children had to be led up the stage to the arbour, there to wait in retirement until they could be brought forward in the supreme crisis of the interview between Mrs. Haller and the Stranger; but, the instant that they caught sight of the scenic arbour, each of the children roared out, 'Me won't be put in de calaboose! me won't be put in de calaboose!' The calaboose is the prison wherein the Boatman, in the Ethiopian Serenader's song, was 'popp'd' when he let his 'passion loose;' and the children were not unacquainted with its durance vile. The scenic arbour bore an unfortunate resemblance to its external appearance; and, as nothing could pacify the two little niggers, or stop their cries, yells, and kicks, the green curtain had to descend prematurely on this novel tableau and extraordinary dénouement to 'The Stranger.' It is needless to add, that, after this experience, whenever Miss Cushman performed Mrs. Haller in America, she made a proviso that she was to be provided with white children, so that the pathos of the scene might not be endangered.

Miss Cushman's final farewell to the stage was taken at New York on November 8, 1874; on which occasion she was presented with a laurel crown, an ode by Richard Henry Stoddard, and an address by William Cullen Bryant. She died, fifteen months afterwards, crowned with honours and mourned by troops of friends on either side the Atlantic, who recognised in her one of the greatest ornaments of the American stage.

# Map-day in Merry England.

All hail to thee, thou First of May, Sacred to wonted sport and play, To wine, and jest, and dance, and song, And mirth that lasts the whole day long.

In the days of Merry England—that is, when merriment was more easily procured and more thoroughly enjoyed than it is now—the darkest part of winter was enlivened by the feasting, fun and frolic of the Yuletide. That gay season went by, the days began to lengthen until summer was at hand. And when, as if the world's youth were renewed, young buds were bursting, and the warm sap was living and stirring again in plants and trees, the lovers of sports and revels broke loose once more from the thraldom of every-day life, and repeated their merry-making out of doors.

Besides the natural desire for open-air amusement, there may have been another cause at work in bringing into vogue the celebration of the advent of summer. In old times the goddess Flora was honoured by rejoicing and festivities at exactly the same period of the year; and some have gone so far as to say that the lighting of bonfires, carried on in Ireland, in the Isle of Man, and in the Highlands of Scotland, is a lingering trace of a Celtic festival, when every hill-top had its Beltein fire in the darkness that followed the first of May.

We must go back two centuries or more to see how rustic simplicity and merriment went hand in hand in England. People cannot enter into them in these matter-of-fact times with right good-will, as they did then. Where should we now find the blithe troop of 'young folke,' who would rise hours before dawn to go a-maying into the woods to the sound of ringing music and blowing horns? And while the leaves were tearing and rustling overhead and the branches crackling as some of them broke down the boughs, others gathered flowers and sweet-smelling herbs to be tied in bunches or woven into garlands. With these the mayboughs were decked, and as the procession returned, the trophies

from the forest were put up over the doors and lattices—all before the rising of the sun. The church, the stocks, and the compact stone prison were not more regular institutions in every village than was the May-pole, standing in its place from year to year; and when it had been ornamented with wreaths and streamers, the country people found plenty to do under its shadow, until other lengthening shadows closed at once the dancing and the day.

Nor were the townspeople less disposed for enjoyment than their rural neighbours. A chronicler of the close of the seventeenth century tells us how heartily they entered into the preparations. 'In the month of May,' says Stow, 'the citizens of London of all estates, generally in every parish, and in some instances two or three parishes joining together, had their several mayings and did fetch their May-poles with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morrice dancers, and other devices for pastime all day long; and towards evening they had stage plays and bonfires in the streets.'

Stow writes in a kindly spirit of all these hearty celebrations; but everyone did not. Even the harmless old May-poles had their enemies, and the Puritan author of the 'Anatomie of Abuses' would have uprooted them one and all. Nevertheless he gives us a highly coloured and not badly drawn picture of the bringing home of one of these woodland monsters so offensive in his eyes. Of this 'abuse' he writes rather bitterly-'Against Maie-day, Whitsunday or some other time of the year every parish towne or village assemble themselves, both men, women, and children; and either altogether or dividing themselves into companies they goe some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birche boughes and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is the Maie-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus—they have twentie or fourtie yoake of oxen, every oxe having a sweet nosegaie of flowers tied to the tip of his hornes, and these oxen drawe home the Maie-pole—their stinking idol rather, which they covered all over with flowers and hearbes, bound round with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometimes it was painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great devotion. And thus equipped it was reared with handkerchiefs and flagges streaming on the top, they strawe the ground round about it, they bind green boughs about it, they set up summer halles, bowers and arbours hard by it and then they fall to banquetting and feasting, to leaping and

dancing about it as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolls.

The May-poles, brought into London from Epping Forest and the wooded lands of Kent, were raised in various parts of the City. Stow speaks of one in Basing Lane near St. Paul's Churchyard. In his time it was kept in the hostelry known as Gerard's Hall, where it might be seen reaching nearly from floor to roof. Tradition called it the wand of the Giant Gerard, and a representation of the giant with his wand was on show outside until, fourteen or fifteen years ago, figure and hostelry were destroyed together.

The May-pole in Cornhill, we are assured, was higher than the tower of Saint Andrew's. From this the distinctive name of the church was taken—Saint Andrew's Undershaft. Geoffrey Chaucer, as he passed below, must have looked up at this mighty shaft; for, in railing at a vain boaster, he exclaims,

Right well aloft and high ye bear your head, As ye would bear the great shaft of Cornhill.

There was one near Vauxhall, another at the northern extremity of Drury Lane, another in the Strand, and many more scattered here and there; for an old-fashioned writer tells how one might fancy the city was the country, and the streets seemed to run through parks.

But alas for the May-poles! On April 6, 1644, a special act of parliament was passed, to order that those in existence should be instantly demolished and no more should be set up under penalty; for they were regarded by the harsh lawgivers of those days as a remnant of levity and a public abuse—and one and all they were swept away.

But the restoration of the Stuarts was the restoration of the May-poles too. Seventeen years had gone by since the destruction of the Strand May-pole, when the pit was dug for a new one in exactly the same spot—a few doors beyond the end of Catherine This was to be the very monarch of May-poles. It was, as an eve-witness of its erection says, 'far more glorious, bigger and higher than ever anyone that stood before it; and the king and his royal brother took a lively interest in its preparation. was made below the bridge, and brought in two tremendous portions to Scotland Yard. On April 14 a procession was formed with banners and streamers, and they carried it away in triumph to its place in the Strand, with drums beating, horns sounding, and the music of fife and tabor. The streets were filled with a vast crowd. King Charles himself appeared in their midst, with the Duke of York and several of the Court. Now James, who was also Lord High Admiral of England, had been considering beforehand

that no number of landsmen could raise such a May-pole; so he had sent specially for twelve sailors, who appeared on the spot with 'their cables, pullies, and other tacklins, with six great anchors.' Before them walked three men bareheaded, carrying three crowns, with flags and streamers. The pole was decorated with all sorts of bright-coloured ornaments, flowers and pennons. Half-way up was a balcony, and on the top the crown of England was represented, glittering, with the sceptre. The two parts were now bound together with iron, and the whole, one hundred and thirty-four feet high, was raised at last in mid air. The King and the Duke of York expressed their approval warmly, and the dense throng of people, bursting into loud acclamations, declared that the golden days were beginning again. At night three lanterns were suspended from it, in honour of the Lord High Admiral, the Vice Admiral, and the Rear Admiral. To this pole Pope alludes:-

> Amidst the area wide they took their stand, Where the tall May-pole once o'erlooked the Strand.

In 1717 it was found to be decaying, and Sir Isaac Newton purchased it from the Corporation, and had it conveyed to the park at Wanstead, in Essex, where he used it for a very singular purpose. A short time before M. Hugon, of the French Royal Society, had sent him a telescope one hundred and twenty-five feet long—the largest in existence at the time. When the telescope was set up in Sir Isaac Newton's garden, the May-pole of the Strand became its support.

That which had stood in Cornhill came much earlier to a less honourable end. It was in Henry VIII.'s reign that the 'prentices of London created a disturbance, serious enough to mark the time of its occurrence as the 'Evil May.' They had become discontented with the numerous foreign artificers, who found employment in the city in almost every trade. Lying in wait for them at night in the badly-lighted streets, these fractious 'prentices would dexterously trip their rivals into the side channels, or fall on them with jeers and blows, caring very little for the interference of the watchmen. Moreover it was gravely suspected that about May-day a general onset was to be made upon the luckless foreign-When this came to the ears of the ministry, a council was held at Whitehall, one of those who assisted thereat being the wise and witty Sir Thomas More. They decided that an order should be issued obliging every man to remain within his house from nine o'clock on the last night of April until the morning of the first of May. But as one of the council was returning home through Leadenhall Street at eleven o'clock he found two 'prentices out amusing themselves in defiance of the law; and when he desired to

have one of them arrested, a crowd gathered in a few minutes and demanded his liberty, defending him determinedly when they had got possession of his person. Others fought to have the order of the council obeyed, and it ended in a sort of riot, in which the original cause of the mischief, the foreign workmen, neither escaped uninjured in their persons nor in their houses. A large number of the rioters was afterwards tried in Westminister Hall, and some were sent to Newgate, others to the Tower. After the 'Evil May' the great shaft in Cornhill was taken down and suspended on iron hooks above the doors of a row of shops, being sheltered by their projecting upper stories. There it was left until the third year of Edward VI.'s reign, when a sermon was preached at Paul's Cross, which so impressed the people with a holy horror of May-poles, that on their return from the service, they took this one down from its resting place, sawed it in pieces, and gave to each man the part which had hung over his own door.

One of the last about London to remain standing was that at Vauxhall, which had not fallen in 1795.

It was in the sixteenth century that the May-day revelry was at its height. The festivities lasted throughout the whole of the month, as we find from an engagement of several gentlemen in Henry VIII.'s reign to become 'servants of the Lady May,' by attending daily in the Royal Park at Greenwich from two till five. The 'service' consisted in being ready to encounter all comers in trials of strength and skill. The programme for one week runs thus—On the fourteenth, jousting: on the fifteenth, archery: on the sixteenth, tournaments: on the seventeenth, wrestling 'all manner of ways.' Here Sunday and a day of idleness must have intervened, for the next date is the twentieth, when they practised casting the 'barre on foote, and with the arm, both heavitand hight.' The same round of sports was begun next day, and thus the popular games continued until the middle of June.

It seems to have been customary to prolong the merry-making as far as possible, once it had begun. So it happens that on the very last day of May, in 1557, there is record of 'a goodly May game in Fenchurch Street, with drums, guns, and pikes; and with the nine worthies who rode, and each of them made his speech, there was also a morrice dance and an elephant and castle, and the lord and lady of the May appearing to make up the show.' The morrice dance here mentioned was most in favour before Queen Elizabeth's time. The May-pole was painted for it with spiral lines of black and yellow, and decorated with the Red Cross of Saint George on the English flag, a white emblazoned pennon floating above. The dancers around it were a motley crowd, eleven players

and mummers being considered the proper number for a morrice There was the 'counterfeit fool,' with his half-idiotic, halfcunning looks and his yellow bib: the gorgeously arrayed Maid Marian, her hair falling loose over her shoulders and surmounted by a golden crown, while she bore in her left hand a pink as the emblem of summer. Quite in contrast was the Franciscan Friar, his looks 'commercing with the ground.' He appeared with shaven head and brown habit, a wallet hanging from his waist beside the knotted cords of the girdle; and in his right hand he carried a chaplet of red and white beads. Next, with his quick strides and boisterous laughter, came Hocus Pocus in his juggler's jerkin, and in great state the monarch of the May on his pasteboard hobby-horse. Tom the Piper followed with fife and drum; and beside all these there was a 'clown or villane,' a franklin or gentleman, a Spaniard, and a Moor in a purple coroneted cap with a plume of feathers, and—last not least—the jester or fool, with his cock's comb and ass's ears, and his bauble and bell.

In many of these street shows the merry men of Sherwood Forest played a part, with their dark green suits and hunting horns. When they were represented their chieftain was the monarch of the May.

With coat of Lincoln green and mantle too, And horn of ivory mouth and buckle bright, And arrows winged with peacock feathers light, And trusty bow well gathered of the yew.

The Lady of the May accompanying him would be Robin Hood's Maid Marian.

With eyes of blue Shining through dusk hair like the stars of night, And habited in pretty forest plight.

At that time the representation of this robber-hero was general over the country, because all the ballads relating to his feats had been revised and published collectively not very long before. At every village he appeared; and we may judge what a favourite he was with the people, from the allusion made to him by Bishop Latimer, when he was preaching once before Edward VI. 'Coming to a certain towne,' it appears in the sermon, 'on a holiday to preach, I found the church door fast locked. I taryed there half an houre and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me and says, Syr, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hoode's day; I pray you let them not. I was fayne therefore to give place to Robin Hoode. I thought my rochet would have been regarded, but it would not serve. I was fayne to give place to Robin Hoode's men.' And

wherever Robin Hood was, Maid Marian sat apart in her bower surrounded by flowers, without joining in any of the sports. The expense of Robin Hood's temporary dwelling seems laughably small in the coinage of our day, but it was not by any means so insignificant then. It is recorded in the parish account of Saint Helen's at Abingdon, where under the date 1566 there occurs, 'Payde for setting up Robin Hoode's bower—eighteen pence.'

But Robin Hood figured in finer merry-makings than those on village greens or in city streets. Henry VIII. in the beginning of his reign was, as everyone knows, excessively fond of sports and pageants. On a memorable May-day one was prepared to his especial liking by two hundred officers of his guards, headed by their captain. The king and Catherine of Arragon, attended by several ladies and gentlemen of the court, were riding early towards Shooter's Hill, when they were taken by surprise, and had to halt before Robin Hood and his numerous band. His Majesty was first diverted by two discharges of arrows: and then the chief, advancing, welcomed the king to his dominions, and courteously invited him to see how his 'merrie men' lived. The long train of nobles followed gaily into the depths of the wood below the hill; and there they reached an immense tent covered with green boughs and blossoms. The woodland chief invited them to enter and partake of venison and wine-all that he could offer. Going in, they found a large hall, a banqueting chamber, and another room beyond; and after having enjoyed the feast prepared for them, they mounted again and rode away. At some distance from the wood two of the revellers, dressed as ladies, met them riding, and accompanied them back to Greenwich.

It may be noticed that, as this story runs, the purpose of the morning ride was a maying expedition to the high grounds of Kent. But the Court at Greenwich was not the first to condescend to the rural pleasures of bringing home the may; there is a glimpse of the custom even in the Death of Arthur. 'Now,' says the old romance, 'it befele in the moneth of lusty May that Queen Guenever called unto her the Knyghts of the Round Table, and gave them warning that early in the morning she should ride on maying into the woods and fields beside Westminster.' Moreover, the 'knyghts' were to be dressed in green, each was to ride with a lady behind him, and esquires and yeomen were to follow.

About a hundred years ago May-fair was flourishing, one of the old institutions of the month. The centre of the fair was the market-house, where buying and selling went on rapidly and noisily, while dramatic entertainments were given in the rooms overhead. Outside the building various games prevailed: skittles, bowling,

running, grinning for a hat, and the numerous other refined sports of 'Merrie England;' while stalls were erected with booths and tents for acrobats and jugglers; and vendors of cheap trifles, crying their wares loudly, pushed about among the crowd. There was the noted gingerbread seller, whose popular name was 'Tiddydol,' taken from the doggerel with which he attracted attention. He made himself remarkable by wearing a rich suit of white adorned with gold-lace, white stockings, and a large apron, the only sign of his vocation. The ever-watchful eye of Hogarth did not pass him over, and in the last of the famous 'Idle Prentice' series, the execution at Tyburn, Tiddy-dol appears holding up a piece of gingerbread. May-fair was discountenanced and ceased after a time, when the residents in Piccadilly objected to the noise.

At that period the celebration of May in London, though declining, was not quite forgotten. Even when the printers' annual banquet at Stationers' Hall was a thing of the past, two classes kept up the festival in their own way—the milkmaids and the sweeps. The latter divided into companies, and, boasting decorations of tinsel, marched and danced through the streets, rattling their shovels and brushes. Amongst them was 'Jack-in-thegreen,' a man under a monster extinguisher made of green boughs. The old writers dwell more pleasantly on the sight of the buxom milkmaids, who one by one paraded Westminster and the suburbs, each dressed in her holiday finery, and followed by her cow adorned with garlands and ribbons.

For some unaccountable reason the milkmaids and the may seem to have been associated everywhere. In country places there was a regular milkmaids' festival, when the girls must have found it difficult enough to walk or join in the dance with their cans, balanced on their heads, surrounded by clashing silver cups. Later on this custom was changed, and tankards, cups, and salvers, borrowed for the occasion, were piled in an immense pyramid and carried from house to house, the bearers soliciting coppers.

In every county and district the practices for the day differed, though all were characterized by the same spirit. At one of the prettiest villages in the north, Temple Sowerby, there was a very curious custom. A number of people would assemble on the village green, and, sitting in a circle, tell tales. Several prizes were to be awarded—a grindstone, and whetstones of various qualities. But the entire merit of the stories was to consist in their extravagance, and the tale at once the most amusing and utterly beyond the bounds of truth or possibility was considered the best. There is an anecdote told in Temple Sowerby of the result of one of these

trials of ingenuity. When the storytellers were in the height of their fun, a carriage appeared on the road, the occupant being the bishop then occupying the see of Carlisle. He stopped the carriage and requested to know what was taking place on the green. One of the storytellers very readily came forward and described the game. The bishop was shocked at such a practice of deceit, and expressed himself strongly and at length upon the subject, declaring it to be a most vicious invention, that would surely result in evil, and concluding with the words, 'For my part, I never told a lie in my life.' The moment they were uttered the storytellers came running with the first prize, the grindstone, and introduced it forcibly into his carriage.

But even the latest of these customs, with all their attendant fun and harmless pleasure, are now only to be remembered by the oldest amongst us. There was something bright and refreshing in their simplicity; that is the most common impression given to the minds of those who hear of the old times or see the relics of them that are left. Thus Washington Irving could scarcely find words to express his delight, when he saw for the first time a May-pole—a venerable one near Chester on the banks of the Dec. Quickly his vivid imagination brought living figures into view; until, looking down on the green slopes of Cheshire, he fancied he had caught a glimpse of Arcadia itself. So can we too be none the less happy for a thought now and then of the merry days gone by; but with this difference, that we have to create May-poles, sunny slopes and all, out of our fertile fancy. So, farewell to them! The oft-expressed desire of seeing old heads on young shoulders may be gratified in course of time; but who would not wish to reverse the words? Who does not regret most heartily that, for one day at least out of the three hundred and sixty-five, we cannot have, as our forefathers had, young heads on old shoulders?

M. E. ATTERIDGE.

## Woman's Place in Pature and Society.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

Man's place in nature seems to be pretty clearly defined. In spite of the fact that he 'is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits,' and that he 'still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin,' he is the best thing that we know; and when we formulate a God we are obliged to make him a man. It is the Father, the Saviour, to whom we pray, not to abstract Force—which, however, is the sign of the power by which we live; it is man whom we worship in his ideal, man whom we credit with the possibilities of godhead and the attainment of absolute perfection; not gravitation, electricity, nor yet the protoplastic cell. This, then, is his place, in spite of his descent—the highest expression of embodied intelligence known to us; in his perfection, according to his ideal, a God.

And woman? Up to this time civilized society has been for the most part founded on the principles that the greater includes the less, that two halves make one whole, and that man has meant also woman. Sex has been looked on as complement, not antagonism; and the laws regulating the division of labour and the appointment of duties have rested on the recognition of differences, and the belief that by those differences and their free exercise we come to harmony. Man has been man and woman woman, and hybrids have not been encouraged. But we have changed all that Tired of the uninteresting division made by nature and society into well-defined men and women, a third sex is rising into social being; and we have to find a name and place for those odd men-women, those creatures of indeterminate class, who are planting their feet in the middle distance between the two extremes, calling loudly on men and gods to witness their daring-and their transformation.

Retaining nothing of the one sex but its form, gaining nothing of the other but its rough-hewn licence and abandonment of inconvenient delicacy, these men-women are the analogues of those

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queer compounds which make the despair of scientific classifiers. How can we call them women when they have rejected as the sign of their shame every mental and moral attribute by which women have hitherto been known, and for which they have been loved? but how are they men when they have nothing of the bodily strength, the mental power, the logical faculty by which these govern and make themselves respected? What can we say to women who voluntarily fling themselves into circumstances where they know that they will lose their tenderness, their modesty, their unselfishness, their devotion? who voluntarily renounce all the sweetnesses of womanhood, persistently deride its characteristic virtues, and spurn its appointed duties? who see in life only an arena where victory is to the strongest, and where 'each for himself' is a cry that makes a louder echo than those old-fashioned versicles about doing unto others as we would they should do unto us, and in honour preferring one another? What can we say to them when they think womanly unselfishness a mark of mean-spiritedness? motherly affection a mere animal instinct shared with the brutes, and not ranking higher than that of the brutes? maidenly modesty a confession of mental inferiority taught by long ages of oppression by tyrant man, and which it is incumbent on the Emancipated to throw off without delay, as a slave throws off his fetters, a prisoner escapes from his cell? Where place them-those women who, in Paris and elsewhere, study anatomy and pathology side by side with young men, and who hold the fact that they feel neither shame nor repugnance a proof of their superiority to prejudice, not of their callousness to womanly delicacy and their abandonment of self-respect?—those women who are ready to discuss in public the most revolting subjects, and to handle without disguise the most delicate details?those women whose highest ambition it is to be notorious, and to whom the quiet modesties, the unobtrusive usefulness of home, are the ultimates to which dreariness and degradation can go? Can we call them women in one single spiritual or mental essential?—and as little men!

Let us look frankly at the demands made by women at this present time and confess what it is that they want. In point of fact they want everything; to keep what they have and to take what they have not; to have a clear stage, with favour superadded. Their very physical constitution puts them on a different plane from that whereon men stand; and by the necessity lying in nerves and muscles they must have the soft places reserved for them. When they say that they want to try their chances with men, they mean that these last are to retire when standing in

their way; for they know that in a fair hand-to-hand fight they must needs be worsted. Let us take the medical profession, which it seems to be the prevalent craze among women to assume, and see what this comes to practically: simply to their having the pick of the profession; that is, those branches undertaken in those places where there is the minimum of bodily fatigue, of exposure, of hard work, for the maximum of pay. What woman would be capable of undertaking a rough country practice such as knocks up even strong men after a time? Imagine an ordinary lady-and we have no right to assume that all our lady-doctors will be abnormally strong-imagine a woman of ordinary physique called suddenly to a mining accident or to one of her own more special 'cases,' riding nine or ten miles over a bleak moor on a dark night in midwinter, with the wind and the rain driving furiously against her, and the night so black that she cannot see a hand's breadth before her. The thing would be impossible; but it is by no means infrequent, as every country practitioner can testify. Yet it is these rough country practices which so often serve as stepping-stones to something better, and by a turn at which, for a time, so many good men have been made. It will be a dreary outlook however, and scarcely a fair division, if, supposing that this craze takes root, the men are obliged to remain content with the rough places of the profession, to keep the former stepping-stones as their permanent position, and to forego all the easier forms of practice because the women have appropriated them. Yet it must come to this, if it comes to anything at all; for women would, as a rule, find a home practice, with all the helps of carriages and fixed hours for consultation, as much as their health could bear; and to put them into ruder harness would be to annihilate them altogether.

So in the legal profession. Could they undertake the more intricate cases where the evidence is hard to obtain, and involves difficult journeys and perhaps dangerous manœuvres; those which deal with the revolting details of hideous crimes; those which demand a certain amount of chicanery and falsehood even for the just cause? Would calling herself a lawyer deprive a woman of her womanhood; and should we like to see our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our wives, plunge their arms up to the elbows in filth such as no honest gentlewoman should touch with her little finger? Would there be one nature for the professional side of her, another for the domestic and womanly?—for though we must grant this to men, can we seriously propose to create a race of women who shall be devil's advocates in the law courts, and saintly ladies, true wives, noble mothers, at home?

thing may be tried. Two ladies of whom we wish to speak with all respect are working now at lawyers' work in a quiet and unobtrusive way; but in view of the impossibilities attending an equal division of legal labour, women as lawyers would have simply the lucrative and easy chamber practice, just as, when doctors, they must have the lucrative and easy town practice; and this is what they really mean and desire when they talk of studying for the law, and of becoming physicians and lawyers by act of official registration.

It may be said that we have nothing to do with the possible results of any social changes whatsoever; that things must work themselves clear; and that ideas which are in the air must get themselves put into shape and submitted to the test of experience, which alone can determine their quality. 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, we cannot overthrow it.' If there is any vitality in the movement by which women seek to possess themselves of the work hitherto held distinctive to men, it is only right that it should have its opportunity of growth and development; and the opponents are simply Mrs. Partington over again. True enough; but just as we may be sorry to see a coal mine opened in a beautiful and secluded valley, to see a trout stream muddled and poisoned with the refuse of dye works, to know that our old home is to be knocked down to make way for a railway station or tea gardens, so we may grieve to see the destruction of our beautiful ideal of womanhood; and in place of the beings hitherto reverenced and worshipped, be given a race wherein is neither beauty nor grace, neither tenderness to bless nor unselfishness to help those to whom until now they have been guides to the highest good, and givers of the deepest happiness.

Also—again one of the things which it will be said may be left to take care of themselves—as every man theoretically represents a family and every woman represents only herself, the greater the number of women who invade the professional provinces of men, the fewer the number of men who can find employment, and the fewer the marriages to be made. The demand for an enlarged area of women's work has arisen from the very fact of the increasing paucity of marriage, by which women are not supported, as in the ordinary way, by men's work. But if the already insufficient offices for men are made still more insufficient by the invasion of women, the vicious circle will repeat itself to an indefinite extent, and the evil will increase with the very efforts made to diminish it. Like a falsehood which helps for the moment but ruins for the future, such abnormal and, as we have

been accustomed to hold them, such unnatural conditions of life may do good to the individual and for the immediate present; but they will destroy the balance of things as now existing, if adopted to any appreciable extent; and we shall have to make a new order of society altogether, composed as we have said of men, women, and the indeterminate third sex-women by their form, men by their manner of life; women by their weakness, men by their audacity; women by their rashness, men by their hardness. For this is true and admits of no denial—that the women who do join the world's fight come out of it more fatally damaged than the men, and are made infinitely harder than are the men.

The modern woman of indefinite classification demands also two other things: mixed schools where the masculine ardour of the rougher sex is to be tamed into so much gentleness as shall permit the weaker to share not only learning but amusements; and the natural consequence, leave to work side by side with men. Such work, taken from the portion hitherto meted out to men, as has been already assigned her, does not please the concrete advocate of Woman's Rights. She finds it ill-paid, dull, monotonous, unintellectual; and not content with the Post Office, so far as she has it, holds out her hands for more, knocking at the doors of Somerset House, the Foreign Office, and indeed demanding clerkships at all four corners. Clerkships! According to the concrete advocate the world is to be saved by the admission of young women of tender years and pretty faces into the offices where young men are supposed to work but in reality idle, but where, according to her, the women, when they are their fellowclerks, will charm them into industry and indoctrinate them into a higher law of life and nobler views of morality. If only they could get these clerkships all would be well, she thinks--clerkships side by side with men, as of the same race of beings as themselves, work abolishing all silly distinctions of sex, and the worker swallowing up the woman. We know of nothing which the out-andout advocates of this radical change in woman's place in nature and society shrink from as the ad absurdum of their theory. Even soldiers and sailors—if women could be found strong enough physically, and mentally desirous of fulfilling these functionseven these let them be, if so minded. All the same they make wild complaints if men take up any of their own dropped work, and do it better; and they allow there an ad absurdum. The most extreme advocate of woman's right to do any part whatever of the ordinary work of man, if she has the will and the power, would probably hesitate were it proposed to place a handsome young fellow, fond of babies and well qualified for his office, as

head nurse in the establishment of a young wife and mother. She would probably, but we are not quite sure, see there the impropriety and the impossibility of mixed functions; though she sees none in her own desire to share in the work of man, and to forget her sex-or remember it-in his office. For herself she demands that there shall be no restriction on capacity, no limit to the possibilities of doing work or holding place. That person. she says, who can do the thing best is the one who ought to do it, sex notwithstanding; but we find her reversing in her own favour the homely old adage, and denying an equal division of sauce from her own boat.

And also we find her, with the queer illogicality of her sex. treating it as a matter of supreme hardship and oppression when a woman is obliged to work, and speaking of field 'hands,' and the like, with the angry pity with which she would speak of slaves unrighteously coerced. But she does not remember that the world of mind and morals is strictly analogous to that of matter: and that the degradation to which the rough work of men with men reduces women in mining and certain agricultural districts, has and will have its analogue in the mental and moral deterioration that will inevitably follow on the professional rivalry of women with men, and their close contact in the struggle of life. Women will not come out of that struggle unharmed. Those who expect that it will make no difference had better go and study the same kind of thing under its material form, in the districts where men and women all work in concert together, and where the last function fulfilled by the wife is that of house-keeper and dispenser —as the last function fulfilled by the mother is that of nurse and care-taker of her children.

How much of this desire to share in the lives of men is simple weariness at the uneventful calm of celibacy? how much curiosity—the desire to penetrate the secrets of men's lives, and to see what they are in their business, their pleasures, their amusements-in all those parts of their existence hitherto transacted out of the sight of women? Women know men only in their relation to themselves—as fathers and husbands, brothers, lovers, and drawingroom guests. But they know that all this is but a small part of a man's life: and they want to know the rest. Which means one of two things-increased licence, or the creation of a third sex. They have the choice; but it is impossible that girls brought up in boys' schools, and young women associated with men in their work, should remain such as they are now. They must of necessity develope into Victoria Woodhulls, or into moral and social amazons: and of the two it is hard to say which would be the worse.

No one wants our English women to be hidden behind jalousies or to be treated simply as the wives and mothers of men; that is as adjuncts to his life only, not individuals on their own' account. But all candid confessors of human nature as it is and always has been, must allow that the indiscriminate mixing up of the two sexes in their studies and pursuits—the indiscriminate interchange of functions demanded by the Advanced Woman, would be, if it obtained, the most disastrous revolution which the world has yet seen. This human nature of ours must change radically from what it is now if our young boys and girls may be launched. into the world without the surveillance or control of their elders while the passions are strong, the fancy active, and the reason weak. Unless indeed passion is to be accepted as the best thing known to us; or failing this, the creation of a third sex wherein humanity has reverted to some of the conditions of the earliest developments. But as one of the plainest facts in physical nature is that the higher the organism the more complete the differentiation between the sexes, we can scarcely think that we are advancing the moral or social condition of the world by mixing up men and women in one indistinguishable mass of functions, offices, and duties; wherein mental characteristics, morals, and personal habits are all identical the one with the other, and men and women are really so much alike, that it is a matter of supreme indifference which is which.

It is an undeniable truth that women ought to be infinitely better educated than they are, taught juster methods of reasoning and a greater regard for facts. Their schools have been for the most part establishments where the blind have led the blind, and ignorance has taught folly—with the result certain to follow in such case: the ditch and the thorn hedge at the end of the day's journey! But when women rage passionately against the injustice of their own ignorance, they never seem to remember that it is they themselves who have willed it so. It is not the fathers who choose the schools for their daughters-not governors who draw up the programme of what is to be taught there—not men who decide that what boys can attain only by long years of close applica-tion girls may knock off by a few months' 'classes'—nor yet men who think it indelicate for a woman to teach a girl the most ordinary, the most necessary facts in physiology on the one hand, but who send her into the dissecting room with a crowd of youths on the other. Whatever girls' schools may have been, women alone have made and ordered them. It is women who mould and regulate the lives of women; and if the answer is, Mothers make their girls what men desire them to be; is there not a counter

reply: Are not all men the sons of women? The miserable thing called a polite education has been and is emphatically the work of women; that more miserable thing called a fine lady is still more emphatically her work and creation; and the fast womanthe girl of the period—is by no means the work of man's hands or brain. But with all this cry for education, the higher teaching formulated and offered of late has not been taken advantage of by women for its own sake so much as for the practical use of which it may be hereafter. Women as a rule do not care for knowledge quâ knowledge. On the contrary they prefer ignorance. There is not a sentimental craze, not a superstitious fancy, not an unworkable crotchet, which does not count its women advocates by hundreds where its men supporters are in units; and their attitude towards science and free-thought generally is lamentable. shrickers who have shaken their skirts at all the restraints of sex have not emancipated themselves from the thraldom of illogical crotchets and weak superstitions-rather the contrary; and more than one subject could be named on which they have shown themselves totally unable to reason, to reflect, and good only for hysterics all round. The vexed question of the equality of the sexes is one of the subjects which the Emancipated handle with no uncertain touch. They take that equality to mean absolute likeness; identity, not parallelism; with the casting vote in their own Starting with the assumption that man's life should be regulated according to their views, not according to his own, and that what they think the best thing is as a matter of course Q.E.D., they allow no freedom to him which they cannot share, and would cut down all those masculine privileges which society and nature have denied to women. They grant no sex in morals, they say, nor even in physical enjoyments; and what they cannot halve they will not give. The women who 'will not allow smoking in the house unless they smoke too'-who are aggrieved by their husbands' billiards, whist, club dinners and the like—the women who are more the possessors of their husbands than those husbands are the possessors of them—they are not the exceptions in England; they are the rule; and marriage means for the most part an institution designed specially for woman's happiness, woman's sway, woman's supremacy-with man coming in for his personal thirds; if he can get them through her generous allowance.

With all these extravagant assumptions, women have their own place both in nature and society; a place beautiful, important, ennobling, and delightful, if they would but think so, if they would but care to make it so. But with the curse of discontent resting on them from the beginning, they prefer to spoil the work

of men rather than to try and perfect their own. Say, of their own special work, what is perfected to such a high degree of excellence as warrants their leaving it to take care of itself while they go to manipulate something else? The servant question in all its branches annoys and harasses everyone; but this, essentially a woman's question, a circumstance of that part of life which is organized, administered, and for the larger proportion fulfilled by women, is confessedly in a state of chaos and disorder, paralleled by none other of our social arrangements. The extravagance of living, of dress, of appointments, which is one part of the servant disorder—because maids, being women, will trick themselves out in, finery to attract as much admiration as their mistresses; and men, being animals, will gorge where their masters feast-whence do these come save from women, rulers of society, regulators of modes and fashions as they are? Do the husbands order the dinners or decide on the length of the train and the fashion of the dress? If the ladies of England chose that the rule of life should be one of noble simplicity, beautiful, artistic, full of meaning and delight, the false ornament and meretricious excess with which we are overweighted now would fall from us, and the servant question among others would get itself put straight. It is a matter of fashion, not necessity, and the mot d'ordre comes from above. But where is the spirit of organization, the resolution to meet difficulties, the courage of self-control, through which alone great movements are made and great reforms led? The women who want to influence the councils of the empire, to have a voice in the making of laws which are to touch and reconcile contending interests, to help in the elucidation of difficult points, the administration of doubtful cases, see the servants standing in a disorganized mob at the gates of the social temple, and are unable to suggest anything whereby they may be reduced to order and content. But at the same time the women who complain of their own stunted lives, and who demand leave to share the lives and privileges of men, deny the right of their maids to live up to a higher standard so far as they themselves are concerned, and hold the faith that service should mean practically servitude.

Again, they complain of the gluttony, the idleness, drunkenness and immorality generally of men, but profess themselves unable to see their way to an establishment of maids under strict matronly surveillance. This, however, is what a certain nobleman of sense and spirit caused to be organized in his own household; with complete success in every direction. There is no absolute need for house menservants; and all the work which women cannot do, such as window-cleaning, wall-cleaning, &c., may be done by

charmen instead of charwomen. True, there are certain offices in country houses which would require special arrangements to be performed with propriety by women. There are the baths to be prepared for the sportsmen before dinner, coming in from their day's hunting or shooting; boots and leathers to clean; and so on; but these might all be done by the charmen aforesaid, while the lighter parts could be left to the maids. Anything which would free our houses from the hateful incubus now resting on them of a small army of able-bodied men dawdling about the halls and antechambers, would be a blessing; besides opening a legitimate door for woman's work of far greater value than the clerkships of which she is so fain. The dangers of households composed only of women lie in the double fact that mistresses are tyrannical and that maids are insubordinate. Men will not stand being what is called 'put upon;' but then they do their work in most cases from a certain professional pride, if from no higher motive. Women, on the contrary, allow themselves to be ill-treated on the one hand, while on the other they do not do what they ought to do, and are often tiresome, disobedient, ill-tempered and without professional pride.

Mistresses complain of the coarseness and inaptness of the ordinary maid; but the converse idea of a lady help frightens them. That spirit of domination, that subtle vein of cruelty, so often belonging to weak creatures, which makes women the hardest taskmasters over slaves, still clings to them even in a free country, and their motto is, Grasping, not giving. The daughter of the house maintains that the elemental barriers of nature, written in sex, have no virtue as against her wishes; so that if she desires to enter into the lists with her brothers and their friends, and try conclusions with them as to which of them shall win the woolsack, she ought to be allowed; but Molly the maid is the accursed of caste, and Molly the maid must content herself with her allotted portion of servitude and humility. The lady and her advocates thundering at the gates of the College of Physicians and at the doors of the Inns of Court, expect that the walls of Jericho are to fall down at the first blast of the trumpet, and that she is to be admitted M.D. and Q.C. for the mere demand; but she is in no wise disposed to grant to her own sex of a grade below herself any recognition, any privilege not consecrated by ages of allowances-by long terms of conventional usage. She demands the woolsack if she can stuff as much law inside her curly head as is held necessary for its fit occupancy; but ask her to accept the lady dressmaker as her equal, the lady cook as in no wise degraded by her labour, and she will think herself insulted. She ought to be a clerk wherever

clerkships are to be had; a doctor, a chemist, or any other of the professions usually assigned to men; with kudos to herself, and no degradation of her work; but the ordinary work of women is anathema maranatha from the point of view of equality.

How it comes about that writing invoices and formal letters 'as per advice' constitutes honourable work, while devising beautiful dress is degrading—that meddling with evil-smelling drugs is an occupation fit for a gentlewoman, but preparing exquisite food is one which precludes the very idea of gentlehood-no one has yet been found to explain. It is one of those odd inconsistencies in reasoning which we must leave to the shrickers and their advocates to make clear. To us it seems that the truest and most natural work of woman is also the most beautiful; and that she could if she would make it both personally lucrative and socially honourable. It is as absolutely necessary that certain household things should be done, and well done, as that we should have masters for our schools and police for our streets-certain things, that is, belonging to the feminine division of the world's work. Cookery is one of these things; housekeeping is another; needlework a third. All the world lately went to see the art-needlework at South Kensington, and all the world gaped and glorified itself, and said how beautiful it was, and just the right kind of thing for ladies! The very women who despise the art of dressmaking—the art of beautiful attire for the person-praised the deftness of hand which embroidered peacocks and poppies for the adornment of the room; in which latter half of the clause they were eminently right, and the Society of which this beautiful work is the visible outcome deserves the fullest gratitude of the generation. where would our art-needlework have been for the mass of women workers if a few great ladies had not taken it up and lent it the lustre of their names to make it fashionable? Such kinds of art-needlework as we have had hitherto-Berlin work, beadwork, embroidery, and the like—though capable of infinite improvement, have all been left, as paying work, to shopkeepers who are not ladies because they are shopkeepers, whatever they may be as women, and are in the same social index expurgatorius as the dressmakers and milliners. Now that it has been seen that real ladies, ladies with historic names, a dozen quarterings, and blood of the bluest, can really work peacocks and poppies, and be paid for what they do without the smallest derogation of dignity, perhaps other real ladies to whom money is a necessity may do the same as a confessed profession, and even take to lingerie and millinery; finding that these purely feminine occupations may be made sufficing and beautiful methods of gaining a living,

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to be pursued without loss of self-respect or of caste. It would be better than leaving their own things to lower hands while striving to compass the things of men; which when they had they would surely not improve.

So, is it more womanly for a woman to be a nurse than a doctor; though apparently, to judge by what we see, the one office is held below the dignity of ladyhood when undertaken in any other manner than as a quasi-religious exercise, while the other entitles the person to be considered a heroine in that she has conquered natural instinct and feminine delicacy, and has gone through her course with as much ease and content as a man. No lady can be a paid nurse on her own account without absolute loss of caste; though she may be a hospital nurse as a Sister without any such loss at all. So, no lady can be a domestic helper, however much a lady and however great her help, and expect to be considered a gentlewoman in any respect. But she may take lessons in cooking at South Kensington for her own pleasure; only she must not turn her knowledge to account and make money by it. This is the way with women, and always has been. What they can do they despise, and let drop through the meshes of their gentility to lower levels; what they cannot do they desire but when they have attained it, no matter what it may be, they will gradually relinquish it to lower hands, and set against it the seal of 'unladylike' as a barrier impossible to be passed.

We said that women have a beautiful place in the world, ennobling and delightful if they would but think so; and this place is to be found emphatically in the home life and in all that pertains to social arrangements. In the rough and tumble of politics, of professional life, already overcrowded with men-they are nowhere, and rightfully nowhere; but in the arts which beautify and dignify human life they are and ought to be supreme. She who could succeed best where impudence is the best trumpeter, and chicanery the cleverest squire, is not a woman to whom we should care to see confided the responsibility of moulding the next generation. Stumping the country as advocates for doubtful questions; lecturing on things that they do not understand and whereon their opinions have neither force nor value; attempting the professions hitherto reserved for men by the natural apportionment of sex; abandoning home for the arena, and love for the fight—this is not woman's work nor woman's place; but the sweetnesses of home life, love of the husband and the children, care to keep society pure and the moral tone of men wholesome and elevated, surrounding their natural work with dignity, making their natural duties noble—this is woman's work, this is woman's place.

This sudden revolt against the home duties and unselfish virtues, the modesties and affections, which formerly distinguished women, is an odd study. This frantic desire for masculine independence and notoriety must have a meaning, if we could but find it. Is it an unconscious check to population? so that a certain portion of our women are instinctively throwing themselves off from the main current of life, impelled thereto by a law of which they themselves do not understand the full significance? In which case, will those who remain true to the old instincts be ranked as more animal than their hybrid sisters, or more human? And these hybrids themselves, what will they become? Emotional as women are by nature and as the very result of their organization, will the third sex carry into their professional work, their political life, the fancies and exaggerations, the loves and the fears, the hysterical excitement, the baseless despair, the irrational hopes, which usually dominate the lives of women? So far as things have gone yet, women have modified or heightened the action of men rather than themselves set the measure by which history and humanity have been governed; but when the national councils are directly controlled by women, it will be curious to watch the working of the system, and to note how far sentiment and how far passion will have the upper hand, and whether the sweeter strain of the unpractical saint, or the instinctive violence of the Mænad, will be the stronger. Women have the two possibilities, as the world has already seen. Their gentler prayers have softened the hard terms of conquerors and brought mercy to the councils of the cruel; and their passionate cries for vengeance have roused the blood of men to fever heat, and from honourable foes transformed them into bloodthirsty fiends. Even now the opinions of women influence men in more than one questionable direction; and honourable names and masculine minds are dragged by them into hysterical associations where everything is represented but common sense and the more workable principles of action. If such things have been done in the green tree of indirect influence, what will be done in the dry of direct command, and when the monstrous regimen of women will be law under which we all shall live? By the look of things this question will answer itself before many years have passed; and for good or evil the preponderating influence of women will come to be recognised as the chief factor in the great sum of mental forces.

Yet surely their influence is strong enough as things are, without their direct invasion of the political platform. As wives and mothers, as sisters, friends, and the first woman whom the young man loves, they have immense power over men; and a power

which is yielded to voluntarily, and not resented by even the most arbitrary—who loves. Without love, we grant it, there is not much influence on either side. But when women are no longer women but hybrids, we doubt greatly if obtaining their rights will carry love along with them, and if they will not lose on the one side more precious things than they will gain on the other.

Nowhere, where women rule, do things go well; neither, where they are kept in slavery and undue subjection. Among the working classes, the women at times rule the men with a heavy hand. and shrewishness fills the public-houses as much as slatternliness. I have myself known instances where the wife has had her own industry separate from the husband's, and where he has given her board-money for himself; and in all these cases I have known the wife both grudge and filch from the food which she had to allow the husband, and hold herself worthy of pity and compassion in that she had to cook for him when she herself would have made up with bread and tea, and passionately abuse him for his sensuality, in that he demanded to be more richly nourished than herself. And what we see in the working classes where the mistress is the best man, we see in the houses of the better-educated where the wife has the money settled on herself, and where she has the stronger will, or holds the theory that women are the cream of creation-men only the skim-milk; and that the cream, by virtue of its own laws, rises to the top--and stays there.

All this, however, does not touch the question of certain wrongs from which women suffer; wrongs relating to their property as wives, and to their rights by nature as mothers; wrongs for which there is no excuse and no righteous reason. Nor does it deny their need for good, paying, honourable work; nor for a deeper and better system of education. It only puts in a plea for the recognition of differences, and for the greater beauty to be found in a manner of life and methods of labour more in accordance with the moral and physical conditions of sex than we find allowed by the Woman's Rights' women. In the rough scramble for place and power with man they will either be worsted or unsexed; but in perfecting their own lives they will remain what they are-women confessedly weaker and different from, but not less noble than, men-women to whom belong the sacred modesties, the sweet affections, the purer virtues of life and home-women to whom are confided the most precious things of life—the love of men, the care of children, the moral governance of society. This craze of unsexed manliness is a false move: we can only hope that it will pass before it has done much vital damage; though assuredly it has done damage enough In substituting excitement for duty; individualism for already!

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love; freedom from natural restraint for the lovely unselfishness of maternity; personal ambition for wifely devotion; it has cut at the root of all the charms and virtues of womanhood. And, but that nature is strong and the wholesome activities of instinct not easily destroyed, we should look with fear and dread to the future woman as to a being owning neither allegiance nordevotion—a being who will know neither how to love nor how to blush—whose personal desires will be her sole rules of conduct—and to whom the gentler virtues and lovelier charities of her sex will be signs of its weakness and symbols of its degradation. But, God be thanked, the race of true women—women pure womanly throughout—has not died out from among us; and we may live in hopes that the hybrids will be overpowered and ultimately improved out of existence altogether, by the application of the scientific principle of the non-survival of the useless and unfit.

## What Chanced by the Mill-Stream.

She was chill, and I was hot,

Water white for the moon's shewing,
Slow his sneer but swift my shot,

Fast the stream of fate is flowing;
Many lovers came, God wot!
And this had grace, and that had not,
Hunchback Rudolph's gain was—what!
Guerdon of grass on grave growing.

Nuremberg with battled towers,
Stone-cold is the mill-stream flowing,
Watched the swards of sleeping flowers,
Rosemary and rue are blowing;
What is this that glides and glowers
With snooded brow—or sun or showers—
By my couch that creeps and cowers;
Mary! keep me from its knowing!

Oh, the wind could blow full lightly,

Quiet tale the mill-stream telling,

Sails stayed where they rested nightly,

Why with life were business melling?

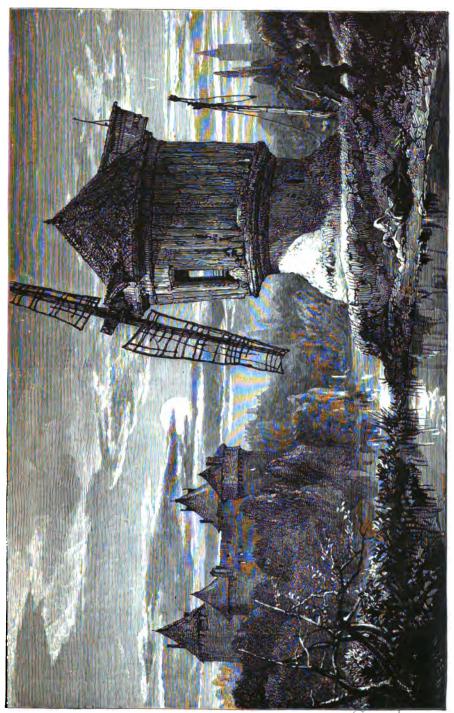
And at times the moon shone brightly,

And my hands were gripping tightly

What had left that load unsightly—

Red dew from the earth up-welling!

Anna, Anna! where thy light,
Gules across the argent field,
Glimmered out upon the night,
Is the darkness any shield?
Where the beads dropped free and light
Through thy fingers, in that night
Heardst thou sob of ruined sprite?
Good St. Martin be our shield



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Underneath the mill we stood,

Water grey for the cloud's fleeting,
Her red ribbon in his hood,

Red in lips and heart are beating;
And in that wild angered mood
I was sport for Satan's brood—
Sang the shot, and sprang the blood,
Fiends or angels spake his greeting!

I was hot and she was chill,

Water white for the soul's clearing,
Out, alas! I wept my fill,
But the end is surely nearing,
And the green steps of the hill
That lies upward from the mill,
And the rushing of the rill,
Are for mind and body's cheering.

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

## William Blake.

## BY J. COMYNS CARR.

Ir is just sixty-seven years ago, and close upon this time of the year, that the first exhibition of the works of William Blake was opened to the London public. The painter, then upwards of fifty vears of age, was living with his brother James Blake at the corner of Broad Street, Golden Square, and in the rooms above his brother's shop he arranged for view sixteen examples of his work. boldly inviting the public to come and judge of his talent. But the public were for the most part indifferent to the appeal, and the exhibition failed. In this, indeed, there is no cause for wonder. Blake's deep and incurable ignorance of the world and its ways, supplies a sufficient reason for the little recognition that he gained from the world. Though he never lacked the will to assert strongly what he believed to be his own great powers in art, he nearly always missed the right means of securing a hearing. Gentle in nature, but not docile in temper, he was apt to be violent and was sure to be imprudent in the expression of convictions deeply and firmly held; and yet, though he did not measure his terms when he had an error to denounce, he never possessed that particular kind of combative power, so eminently possessed by Haydon, for example, which serves in itself as a source of attraction. But although we can well understand why Blake's exhibition in Broad Street should have failed, it remains surprising that during the years that have elapsed, no effort should have been made to bring his designs together. In the brief history of modern English art there is no more remarkable figure than his. produced no single work that is perfect in itself, at least there is nothing from his hand that is not deeply suggestive of the great problems with which art has to deal. All that he does touches the very essence of pictorial invention and awakens a new and profound consideration of the highest laws that control the artist in his work. No Englishman had ever before so powerfully and persistently asserted the place of high imagination in pictorial design, and it may be said further that no one better appreciated

the great and enduring distinctions between the language of art and of literature, or more completely understood the means by which the vague and abstract images of the one are to be translated into the fixed and certain outlines of the other. These reasons are in themselves sufficient to render Blake a most fascinating subject of study to the critic and student of art, and it is certainly surprising that it should have been left to the generous effort of the Burlington Club, in the present year, to collect for the first time the designs of a man who holds a unique place in the history of English art.

I have referred to this earlier exhibition organized by Blake himself, because the famous descriptive catalogue which he then put forward by way of commentary to his designs, contains a very foreible statement of his artistic faith. It is best, where it is possible, to let a man speak for himself, and although Blake's utterances often want coherence, and not uncommonly stand in need of interpretation, they contain much that may help us to a true understanding of his position. But before examining the contents of the Descriptive Catalogue it may be well to touch briefly upon some of the chief facts of the artist's earlier career. In the year 1809, when Blake opened his exhibition and issued his catalogue, he was by no means entirely unknown. The words 'pictor ignotus' which Mr. Gilchrist attached to the title page of his biography are apt to convey and to perpetuate a false impression and to imply that he never at any time, nor from any influential body of men, received the praise due to his genius. In the stricter significance of the term this no doubt is true. the end of his life he certainly remained but little known as a painter, nor need the neglect of the world be attributed to any other cause than the limited range of his own powers in the use of colour. Mr. Scott, in his introduction to the Catalogue of the Burlington Club, justly observes that 'it is in vain to consider Blake as a master in the use of the palette, though he had a lovely sense of colour.' These words deserve to be remembered. Why it was that with this lovely sense of colour, and with an industry that was equal to every endeavour, he never became in any full sense of the word a painter, I shall presently try to consider, but for the moment it is enough to remark that no one who has studied his works as they are now collectively displayed, would be disposed to dispute Mr. Scott's conclusion. As a painter therefore it is true that Blake was obscure. He had joined the schools of the newly formed Royal Academy in the year 1778, and had subsequently contributed some five times to the Academy exhibition; on the last occasion in the year 1808, when he sent the beautiful invention

of Jacob's Dream, now to be seen in the Burlington Club. His contributions were usually hung in the drawing and miniature rooms, and were obviously not seriously regarded by the Academicians as the works of a painter. It is, however, by no means true that Blake's gifts of design had remained entirely unappreciated. In the year 1796 he had been employed by Edwards, of New Bond Street, to execute a series of illustrations to Young's 'Night Thoughts,' and in the preface to the publication, conjectured to have been written by Fuseli, Blake's genius as an inventor is liberally recognized. And again, in 1805, when he had executed a series of designs to Blair's 'Grave,' the artist's portrait was set as a frontispiece to the volume containing them, and the members of the Royal Academy bore their testimony to the grandeur of the inventions. Fuseli again introduces Blake to the public, and this time with ample terms of praise, and we know that the first edition of the work secured upwards of six hundred subscribers; while, as a result of the publication of these designs, we find Blake in the year 1807 engaged on a drawing of the 'Last Judgment' commissioned by the Countess of Egremont.

Thus in 1809 Blake's reputation was so far established as to give him a fair right to appeal to the public on his own behalf. The opening of his exhibition at a time when his name had just been made widely known by a highly successful publication, was no mere piece of eccentric folly; and although Blake, with his essential unworldliness, would be sure to carry out the scheme in the most ineffective manner, there is no reason for regarding it as the wayward enterprise of an obscure and unknown artist. At any rate it may be said that at no time before had he reached so near to popularity, nor was there any subsequent period of his life when his reputation stood so high. Thus the moment is specially favourable for learning from Blake himself what were his views in Art, and in what he felt himself to be most clearly antagonistic to the prevailing ideas of his time. It is probable that the exhibition itself was the immediate result of a recent quarrel with Stothard and the publisher Cromek. Blake felt himself to be deeply aggrieved by the rejection of his large designs in illustration of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Pilgrims,' and the exhibition was in fact an attempt to appeal from what he believed to be an ignorant prejudice on the part of a few, to the more liberal judgment of the public. This fact must be borne in mind, because the soreness of his own personal feeling has undoubtedly imported a combative element into the statement of his views as set forth in the catalogue. All that he has to say of himself, or of his rivals, is thrown into the extremest form, and, forgetting that his

avowed object was to conciliate the attention of a public ignorant of private quarrels among artists, he seizes the occasion to expound his own view by a constant, and by no means measured, reference to what he believes to be the fallacies of others. But here again is another consideration that adds significance to the utterances of the catalogue. He had never shrunk at any time from expressing his opinions about his art, but now he felt that his ideas and the embodiment he had been able to give them were on their trial, and he therefore states with a peculiar distinctness and emphasis all the thoughts that have been maturing themselves during fifty years. It cannot be but that this confession of faith, if we understand it rightly, must help us to understand the qualities of his design, and to appreciate what there is of beauty in his work.

One of the chief contentions of Blake, stated in this catalogue and elsewhere, concerns the right and power of plastic Art to follow the imagination in its most sublime flights of vision. Under a tempera painting of the Bard from Gray, which may now be seen on the walls of the Burlington Club, he quotes some of the verses of the poet, and then adds this comment of his own:—

'Weaving the winding sheet of Edward's race, by means of sounds of spiritual music and its accompanying expressions of articulate speech, is a bold and daring and most masterly conception, that the public have embraced and approved with avidity. Poetry consists in these conceptions; and shall painting be confined to the sordid drudgery of fac-simile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances, and not be, as poetry and music are, elevated into its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception? No, it shall not be so! Painting, as well as poetry and music, exults in immortal thoughts.'

These sentences express the constant aspiration of Blake's art. To raise design to the ideal level of poetry and music was the desire of all his life. So wide to him were the possibilities of plastic expression, so quick the sense which brought for every great thought its corresponding image, that he could not understand the law or the custom which had excluded the higher imagination from the realm of the artist. And yet it is a fact altogether indisputable, that English painting was then, and still continues, far below the imaginative level of English literature. To literature it has always been permitted to attempt the highest triumphs, and the writer has not been thought mad who has chosen in the research of beauty to leave the world of common things and to desert the portraiture of manners. But in English art it is not so. The

standard here has always been lower, and the artist has seldom ventured at all, and has always ventured at his peril, to trust like the poet to the strength of his invention. It would take too long to enter upon a consideration of all the causes that have led to this result. But the fact remains that since the Reformation art in England has held only a subordinate place in the history of the imagination, and has never from the first attempted to mirror to men's eyes the great new world of beauty and passion that the ruin of the old order of things set free. All the force of the English renaissance seems to have found its way into English literature. Imaginative art was left to perish with the system that had given it birth and encouraged its earliest efforts. In the new birth it had no part. It was not rightly prepared or adequately equipped to take over and shape to its own uses the vast inheritance of the modern spirit, and the time was already too late to gain from the art of other nations the support and example that might have armed the English artist for so great a labour. The splendid vision of the Elizabethan poetry, with its rich outlook over the great problems of life, and its deep penetration of the secrets of human beauty, found no help or fellowship in the realm of painting. The painter had neither the means nor the ambition to fathom these things. He was not even sensible of the greater triumphs that were possible to his craft, and was deeply ignorant of the means by which they might be secured; and thus placed at the mercy of any external influence, English painting was content to follow the lead of a long line of foreign portrait painters, whose precepts were at last naturalized and carried to perfection in the brilliant achievements of Reynolds and Gainsborough. But before these men had appeared, there was one Englishman who had ventured to make of his art a means of intellectual expression. It is by a curious coincidence that Blake should have engraved one of Hogarth's designs. These two men stood at the very opposite poles of the ideal world: their ambitions and their resources were as different as it is possible to conceive. Hogarth, a master in the use of the brush, was in close and immediate sympathy with the life of his time: Blake, always an imperfect painter, was only inspired by the shapes of a distant world of vision. And yet these two men were deeply allied in this, that they both sought by all the means in their power and by methods that owed little to tradition, to bring their art into new correspondence with the world of intellectual ideas. The first. as a realist and a satirist, drove home, with a force that even the literature of his century can only equal, a fierce denunciation of human vice and folly; and he did this, it must always be remem-

bered, with an unfailing sense of what was due to his own art. The more Hogarth is studied in these days, the more clearly does it appear that he was before all things a painter. His power in the use of colour, his delicacy and refinement in the management of tone, were not inferior to what can be shown either by Reynolds or Gainsborough; and yet, without neglecting or violating the requirements and the laws of painting, he managed to restore, or perhaps it should be said to create, that alliance with the movement of ideas without which art has never risen to any adequate representation of human life. For this, too, Blake strove with all his strength, but he chose for the material of his invention, not the creatures of artificial existence, costumed and mannered and beset with triviality and folly, but the ideal figures of an abstract world, through whom he sought to shape and image and bring near to men's sight the most distant beauties of the imagination. This is what he means when he declares, in the words affixed to his picture of the Bard, that painting, as well as poetry and music, exults in immortal thoughts, and it is this ambition which he has in mind when he asks if 'painting is to be confined to the sordid drudgery of facsimile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances, and not be, as poetry and music are, elevated into its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception?' And then, lest it should seem that he sought to pursue some intangible phantom of the brain, without form or shape for art to render, he adds, 'a spirit or a vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour or a nothing; they are organised and minutely articulated, beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light, than his perishing mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all.

With these cardinal points in Blake's creed in our minds, we may understand and appreciate the most remarkable qualities of his art. In all his designs, nothing is more immediately observable than the definiteness and extreme precision of his method, the unflinching determination of his lines. Nothing is uncertainly seen or falteringly expressed. However lofty the theme, however remote from human experience the image that he seeks, his imagination is never tempted to surrender, or to leave even the last word untold. In this sense no works that were ever produced are more perfectly finished than his—none, that is to say, contain a more complete and exhaustive utterance of the thoughts that have inspired them. This fact deserves to be noted, because the obscurity of Blake is a charge commonly repeated; and if the man

be considered in his double capacity of poet and painter, the charge has unquestionable foundation. Not even the earliest writings of Blake are free from obscurity, and the latest are scarcely intelligible; and yet, while he was producing those dark poetic riddles called the 'Prophetic Books,' he was also producing designs the essential attribute of which is a clear and precise This apparent contradiction in the exercise of his expression. double faculty suggests one of the most interesting problems that criticism can take heed of. Blake himself was never tired of asserting the need of clear and intelligible expression, and his gravest charge against the work of other men is, that they blot and blur and confuse their inventions by dark and cloudy colour. In this he was entirely sincere. Anyone who has studied the exhibition of his works will admit that he did not tolerate indefiniteness or obscurity; sometimes, where he fails most, the failure indeed comes, not from a want, but from an excess of simplicity, and we are apt to feel, in the presence of some of his most sublime inventions, that a mode of treatment so intimate and familiar springs from the trusting vision of a child rather than from the serious imagination of a man. The secret of this apparent inconsistency is to be found, I think, in a distinction that has already been briefly noted. It has been said that, although Blake strove to raise art to the ideal level of poetry, he was not forgetful of the particular conditions that control the artist, and that he was never tempted to leave the images of the one as vague as those of the other. It would be more correct to say that in Blake's nature the artistic sense was morbidly developed. It was not merely that he was able to translate grand and sublime thoughts into the language appropriate to art, but that he scarcely possessed the power of apprehending them in any other way. The process was immediate and instantaneous; the thought struck itself into symbol at the first sudden and certain vision, and what to other men is the result of reflection, and sometimes of long experiment, came to him almost unsought. Thus we have in Blake the most interesting, because the most extreme, expression of the essential art gift. When we say of a man that he possesses a genius for art, we do not mean merely that his imagination is strong or his love of beauty true, but that, by a faculty specially his own, he is able to find for the things of vision a sensuous image; and within the strict limits of a craft that has only lines and colours for its symbols, he is able to fix such a graceful pattern as shall for ever keep imprisoned some great secret of beauty. This special faculty of the artist is, and must always be, as rare as imagination itself. It comes of a peculiar intensity of mental vision, joined to a deep

and familiar knowledge of the expressional resources of the things of the actual world. In England, where the special conditions of art and its resources are even yet only imperfectly mastered, where the painter is constantly striving, not merely to emulate the triumphs of the writer, but to steal his methods and to appropriate his language, even the value of this special gift is scarcely understood. The great majority of English painters have not possessed it; they have not known and have not felt how much their art was powerless to do, or how potent it could be made if rightly directed. Thus the work of Blake, which yields to none that has been produced in the freedom and audacity of its invention, and which yet always observes the laws that bind the artist, must be a constant wonder, and in some sense, too, an enduring example. Every class of artists,' said Fuseli, in his introduction to Blair's 'Grave,' 'in every stage of their progress or attainments, from the student to the finished master, and from the contriver of ornament to the painter of history, will find here materials of art and hints of improvement.'

But how was it, one may ask, that this power of imagery did not serve Blake in his poetry as well as in his painting? Why is it that, from the time he produced the 'Songs of Innocence' and the 'Songs of Experience,' his poetic faculty gradually failed in coherence, until at last his utterances became a chaos which even a brother poet with the best will and the highest power may not reduce to order? Mr. Swinburne's attempted interpretation of the 'Prophetic Books' is an effort of genius which those will best appreciate who have tried to become familiar with this part of Blake's writings; but even Mr. Swinburne would not claim to have reduced his author to coherence. And yet, during the period of the production of these works, and after, Blake executed designs of the utmost beauty and simplicity, finishing his career with the engravings to 'Job' and to 'Dante,' efforts that take rank among the highest and the simplest of his achievements. To this riddle which Blake's life presents, it has seemed to many persons sufficient solution to say that he was mad. Mad he may have been, and it is perhaps better to admit that he was; but this short word, though it satisfies many minds, does not at all help to the understanding of the problem of the artist's life. To me, I confess, there is nearly always in Blake's design a touch of that excessive simplicity which in a child we call childishness, and in a man the world will call insanity. His invention touches sublime things with so familiar a grasp, and invades the supernatural realm with a step so confident, sometimes so audacious, that the result does not always assure or convince us that he was aware of the long flight

between earth and heaven, and his trust is like that of a child who stretches out his hand to seize the stars. But, admitting so much, the problem still remains unsettled, why the one faculty that he possessed should have suffered so far in excess of the otherand to explain this, it is necessary to consider again what has been called the morbid development of the artistic gift. Being himself both a poet and a painter, Blake presents the most forcible illustration that can be conceived both of the sympathy and the distinction of the two arts. To the poet who has to mould the intellectual material of language to the uses of beauty, the logical faculty is as indispensable as the imaginative gift. He may dwell upon the sensuous and figurative element in language; but this sensuous element must subserve the logical, and the verse must first satisfy the conditions of intellectual expression before it can find its way to delight the sense of music, or form, or colour. Blake the logical faculty was from the first feeble, and grew gradually weaker as his brain became thronged with images that overpowered his resources. At the first, when the themes he chose were simple, his poetic means were sufficient; but in later life, when he sought to enter into remote and difficult speculation, his feeble power of ranging ideas in their intellectual order utterly failed, and he was driven by the dominant influences of his nature to substitute a series of images for a logical sequence of ideas. He endeavoured, in fact, to use words as though they were distinct images endowed with sensuous form and colour. And, to those who have tried to fathom the 'Prophetic Books,' it will seem plain that to him they were so. His verse is a piece of elaborate symbolism, to which he alone possessed the key; and for every word that now stands as a puzzle to all readers, there existed in his brain a radiant image robed in lovely colour and fixed in deter-Hence we have in Blake the exact converse of the common failure of modern art. Instead of trying, as so many of our painters have done, to use the material of art as if it could be moulded by the intellectual processes of language, he strove to invade the realm of the poet with the instruments of painting, and to employ words as if they were fixed symbols, fair for the This, in truth, is the artistic faculty in a state of eve to see. morbid development. And it was no wonder that, when the faculty gained supremacy in his mind, his essays as a poet should have became a chaos that is beyond human power to set in order. But the failure of the poet did not touch the inventions of the That overmastering inclination to apprehend and to express ideas by images is the very life and essence of all pictorial design. By the potent help of such a gift, all the vague world of

vision is made populous with living forms; the thought that the mind can scarcely grasp for its terror or sublimity is fixed in an image for the eye to see, so that even the splendid symbolism of Hebrew poetry takes form and colour; and, in a picture of inexpressible beauty, we are able to realise what a sight it was 'when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' These, in truth, are the scenes in which Blake's invention stands alone. The series of splendid illustrations to the Book of Job were known before the exhibition of the Burlington Club was thought of; but in that exhibition are to be found many examples of equal sublimity that must be new even to the majority of those who have tried to know Blake well. Look, for instance, at that design of 'Jacob's Ladder,' exhibited by the artist in the Royal Academy of 1808. Most artists have been content to take the earthly figure as the chief feature of their composition, and have only timidly ventured some few steps up the steep path that leads to heaven: A flood of light, a few angel forms descending and near the ground—these, with the sleeping body of Jacob, have been enough to satisfy those who have attempted to present the miracle. But for Blake the heavens were opened, and it was the pathway through the skies that the Bible story brought most vividly to his eyes. The winding stair mounts through the blue vault of sky, that is lit with white stars until it reaches higher up to the golden effulgence of the throne, that is seen far away and yet distinct. And up and down this winding stair the angels are ascending and descending with no uncertain tread. Their forms are familiar, and yet lacking nothing of sublimity; simple, and still divine; as though imaged by one who felt no surprise at the sight of this celestial vision, and whose sympathies were nevertheless fresh to enjoy its awful beauty. Sometimes, as in the painting of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, Blake touches a tragic note; but the tragedy in the painting, as in the parable, has something more and something less than human significance. Something more; because to Blake this sublime symbol of human fate had a reality that it had not for others. It remained abstract; but it also became intense and determined in its presentment, and took human shape without sinking into the place of merely human fortune. And something less than a picture of life all Blake's work must be, because his imagination never penetrated the circumstances of the actual world as it penetrated the world of vision. 'Blake's originality,' as Mr. Scott has aptly observed, 'was guarded about by ignorance; his was the most childlike manhood we are acquainted with; he retained his morning freshness throughout his long day: with him it was as with Wordsworth's ideal infancy,

which comes "trailing clouds of glory;" and neither the clouds nor the glory ever left him.' This is profoundly true. Though he lived to a good old age, Blake never can be said to have lived in the world. He kept always on the spiritual side of the human confines, and he never understood that kind of passion which is complicated and enriched by the infinite trial of human circumstance. This fact about Blake, associated with the excess of simplicity already remarked, imposed a distinct limitation upon his genius, while at the same time it granted to his invention an extraordinary freedom in realms where others must tread insecurely. Passion, emotion, character, he understood only in their most extreme and simple expression. Perfect innocence, as of angels and children; and incommensurable evil, as of Satan and his angels; terror, like the 'clustered woes,' in his illustration to Young's 'Night Thoughts,' in the book belonging to Mr. Bain; or absolute peace and tranquillity, as in the vision of Job's children singing around him: over all of these things his genius had command. But he had not that power, of which Michael Angelo may be taken as the supreme exponent, of stamping humanity itself with all its complex problems of character and fate, and making of a single human form an image of all the world. What Blake could do was to employ the forms of natural men and women to express the progress of supernatural drama. He never knew, and could not interpret, the great realities of life, nor had he any control of that kind of beauty which springs from the pressure of experience; but once set his spirit free in another realm, and he will make the vision of it real and living, in a degree impossible even to the dreams of other men. It was no wonder if to a man so endowed the air should seem inhabited by spirits invisible and dumb to all the world but him. That he actually believed in the presence of these spirits and thought not merely that he had seen them, but that they had been there to see, is only a proof that in him the faculty of vision reached the point of disease. It was by a morbid overwrought intensity of the imagination that Blake was led to such a belief, and at this point we may admit the madness that so many desire to assert of him; but the disease. it must also be said, was only the excess of a great quality infinitely more rare than the insanity that went with it.

For, if the excess of simplicity is morbid, simplicity itself is the very highest endowment of genius. The power which Blake possessed of inventing without the artifice and apparatus of a feeble vision, of reducing the most sublime theme to familiar expression without sacrificing its sublimity, is the noblest that art can claim. The secret of the grace of Greek art lies in this power

of exhibiting heroic character by means of the simplest and most unconscious movement, the avoidance of all that is rhetorical in gesture, the dependence upon all that is familiar and unconscious. In the best of Blake's works these qualities are supreme. There is a directness and sincerity in his choice of attitude which stamps conviction upon the result; a neglect of all graces that come by seeking and elaboration, that shows that the inventor has worked without hindrance or hesitation. Even in a work like the 'Last Judgment' all is precisely and confidently made out, and we have Blake's own explanation of the significance of every group. Nothing could be fitter than his own description of the part of the design which presents the opening of a happy immortality. 'Before the throne of Christ on the right hand,' he says, 'the just in humiliation and exultation rise through the air with their children and families. Some of them are bowing before the Book of Life, which is opened on clouds by two angels; many groups arise in exultation; among them is a figure crowned with stars and the moon beneath her feet, with six infants around her,—she represents the Christian Church; green hills appear beneath, with the graves of the Blessed which are seen bursting with their births of immortality. Parents and children, wives and husbands, embrace and arise together.'

Hitherto I have touched rather upon the quality of Blake's imagination than his technical resources; but it will be interesting to consider for a moment his opinion upon different methods of art, and how far they affected his own practice. Here, again, the 'Descriptive Catalogue' prepared for his exhibition in 1809 will help inquiry. Of all the works now displayed at the Burlington Club there is none more remarkable for power of lighting and depth of colour than the painting of 'Satan calling up his Legions.' This was exhibited by the artist in 1809, and is described by Blake himself as 'having been painted at intervals for experiment on colour without any oily vehicle.' 'It is worth attention,' he adds, 'not only on account of its composition, but of the great labour that has been bestowed on it: three or four times as much as would have finished a more perfect picture. The labour has destroyed the lineaments: it was with difficulty brought back again to a certain effect which it had at first when all the lineaments were perfect.' And then he concludes with a general statement about this and others of his works which throws not a little light upon his difficulties as a painter, and partly explains his imperfect mastery of colour. 'These pictures,' he writes, 'among numerous others, painted for experiment, were the result of temptation and perturbations labouring to destroy imaginative power by means

of that infernal machine called chiaro oscuro in the hands of Venetian and Flemish demons: whose enmity to the painter himself and to all artists who study in the Florentine and Roman schools, may be removed by an exhibition and exposure of their vile tricks. They cause that everything in art shall become a machine. They cause that the execution shall be all blocked up with brown shadows. They put the original artist in fear and doubt of his own original conception. The spirit of Titian was particularly active in raising doubts concerning the possibility of executing without a model; and, when once he had raised the doubt, it became easy for him to snatch away the vision time after time.' In another passage Blake says, 'I have now discovered that without nature before the painter's eye he can never produce anything in the walks of natural painting. Historical' (by which he means imaginative) 'art is one thing, and portrait is another-Happy would the man be who could unite them!' All these utterances have a very definite meaning and deserve the attention of any one who would understand Blake's paintings. Little as at that time he could have seen of Italian art, his distinction between the schools of Venice and Florence is nevertheless true and profound. Venice, whatever the themes of its painters, is pre-eminently the school of portrait and not of imagination. It was in Venice that art first found out the charm of skilful imitation, the beauty of nature itself minutely and magically rendered. Portrait, and landscape, which is the portraiture of nature, took the place of the religious ideal at Venice, just as human passion and the worship of the antique took the place of the religious ideal at Florence; and in one case abstract design, and in the other realistic colour, assumed supreme control. Now it happened that at the time when Blake was striving to restore imagination to its place in art, and to revive the practice of design, the example of Venice was in the ascendant in England. Sir Joshua always professed the utmost reverence for Michael Angelo, but he gained his own power by the imitation of the Venetian models. Gainsborough, without any powerful influence from without, was a born naturalist of the same school, and showed both in portrait and in landscape the kind of execution which is based upon reality rather than imagination. Blake perceived clearly enough that this kind of execution, whatever its merits, was altogether unfitted for the higher kind of invention to which he devoted himself. He perceived that the imitation of nature, as this was understood by the Venetians, and by the men of his own time who so nobly revived the Venetian tradition, only disturbed the expression of imaginative art and destroyed its magic. The colouring of Venice, with its exquisite

distinctions of tone and its endless enjoyment of the most minute realities, cannot be fitly employed in the service of abstract design; but Blake, who perceived this truth clearly, was not able to find out and perfect for himself another and more appropriate system. In his drawing, and even in his management of light and shade, he could take counsel from the works of the Italian engravers, which he had begun to collect from a boy; but it is probable that he had no means of familiarising himself with the painting of the one school that is pre-eminent in the qualities of the imagination.

If, without having seen any of Blake's attempts in colour, one were asked, on the evidence of his drawing or engraving, what school he would follow, the answer most certainly would be-the school of Florence. The early Florentine painters, had he known their works, would have supplied him with a model in which abstract design and lovely colour were blended. They would have shown him that, without attempting the naturalism of Venice, it was still possible for the painter to enrich his work with splendid hues, wrought out by a system of precise and solid execution. it was, Blake never was able to conquer the difficulty. mained to the last possessing, as Mr. Scott has observed, 'a lovely sense of colour,' but without the knowledge that could alone have given it a full expression. The examples that were offered to him in the art of his time only irritated without helping him, and there was no one able to point the way to a practice more in sympathy with his aims. Thus Blake remains, in this sense at least, the 'pictor ignotus' that his biographer has styled him. In the choice of colour his imagination guided him aright, but in the use of colour he never became in the full sense a painter. his work seldom passes beyond a grand suggestiveness or the record of a beautiful instinct in the selection of harmonious tints: but it is not to be thought, because he failed himself, that his principles on this point were false or foolish. He was certainly right in the belief that realistic colouring was unfit for the purposes of his design; and it is no wonder that, standing alone amid the painters of his day, he was unable to work out for himself a better method.

## Scotching a Snake.

#### BY STEPHEN J. MAC KENNA.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

'Well, but who was it, Jack?' asked I rather pettishly; for I did not believe in Murdell's wild Indian stories one bit, and was inclined to regard *Hemeralophia* and *Nyctalopia* as fancies of a sun-struck brain.

'It was Kenton—Dr. Kenton—of the old Company's Service; a deuced clever fellow. He expected to recover, but he never did, and the only enjoyment of his latter years was in going from doctor to doctor about his case, and setting the whole profession at logger-heads. You never saw such a row as he raised in private and in the medical prints. For, while one set said he was curable, and that the faculty—or disease, I suppose I ought to say—of being blind in the light and able to see in the dark was well known from the days of Hippocrates down; the other lot declared that both *Hemeralophia* (day-blindness) and *Nyctalopia* (night-blindness) were almost mythical, and that Kenton was a half-crazed impostor.'

'Hem!' grunted I, with all the delight of satisfied cynicism; 'I think my belief would incline towards the latter party.'

'Would it, by Jove? Then you are wrong,' broke in Murdell in a temper; 'I knew him well, and saw such proofs of his strange blind-sight in a most curious family case, that no power on earth could shake my faith. I wrote all the circumstances down just as they occurred at the time; and if you will take the trouble to read my notes I am certain you will be convinced. The three who alone could be hurt are dead, and you may tell the story where and when you like.'

Murdell rose and banged out of the club, and the next day his servant brought me down a roll of manuscript. I need hardly say I read it with avidity; but I did not expect to be convinced, as I teally was; and my only object in placing (with Major Murdell's

full consent) the narrative before the public is that an interesting scientific phenomenon may be fully discussed.

The Major's manuscript is printed just as I received it, and I am not responsible either for its theories or its language.

### CHAPTER I.

### THE LADY AND THE SCOUNDREL.

I had pulled down in a light boat from Monmouth, and, on arriving opposite the little hamlet of Tintern, discharged my boatman, shouldered my portmanteau, and made my way up to the Beaufort Arms. After a cosy dinner and a prime bottle of claret I lit my cheroot, and stepped out into the warm autumn night, to enjoy a ramble to the ruins of the glorious Abbey lying at my feet and washed by the lapping waters of the gently flowing Wye. In the crumbling wall of the ancient fane I easily found a breach, over which I scrambled, and was enjoying a quiet study of the lights and shades of the delicate architecture, when, to my great annoyance, I heard voices on my left, and almost directly two figures came out into the silvery moonbeams. One was a fine soldier-like man, leaning on the arm of the other, who were the turban and dress of a Mussulmanee body-servant.

They rapidly exchanged words in Hindustani; so, to avoid unpleasantness, I crossed to their side of the nave, and informed the Englishman that I understood the language. He seemed startled when he heard my voice, and I in turn was surprised to find that his general appearance—he kept his eyes studiously fixed on the ground—was perfectly familiar to me.

- 'Surely,' said I, 'it is Kenton? Don't you remember me at Delhi in 183—? Murdell, of the Dzoulgar Horse.'
- 'Murdell! Of course I do. By Jove, how glad I am to meet you!' And he shook me warmly by the hand. 'Meet you,' he went on, 'for I cannot see you; but, of course, you heard of my misfortune?'
  - 'Misfortune! No. What do you mean?'
- 'I am blind,' answered Kenton in a low, sad voice; 'lost my sight exploring in the Snowy Range of the Himalayas after you left. Well, well, I must be resigned. But are you staying here, Murdell?'
- 'Yes; rowed down from Monmouth this evening, and am at the Beaufort.'
  - 'I'm there also. Let us go up. It is getting chilly, and—'He broke off, and asked Abdoola, as he called his servant, a

He broke off, and asked Abdoola, as he called his servant, a question, in some hill-dialect I did not understand. The latter

signified assent; and, as the moon had just gone in, and there was no more for me to see, I agreed, and we made our way towards the hotel, Kenton walking quite easily up the rugged, stony path, trusting little, as it seemed to me, to the guiding arm of the Mussulman.

Stanley Kenton and I had been constant comrades in many a wild campaign against the frontier tribes of northern India; but the inevitable changes of regiments and quarters had of late years separated us, and for many a long day I had heard nothing of him, and he had quite passed from my mind. So we sat late into the soft September night, over some brandy and manillas of the true brand, chatting away of old times and bygone events, and framing plans for future meetings in London, to which we were both proceeding the next day, until Abdoola entered with bed-room candles (hitherto we had been sitting in total darkness, as Kenton declared he felt the light), and marshalled us off to our chambers.

Once in London, we renewed all our former intimacy by degrees, and at length became so friendly that hardly a week passed that did not find me crossing from my snuggery near the Regent's Park, to the comfortable little house in Bayswater, where Kenton, Abdoola, and the dirtiest and drunkennest of charwomen kept garrison. On one visit I unexpectedly found a dark, commanding, passionate-looking girl with Kenton, whom he introduced to me as his only sister; and on many subsequent visits I had the good fortune to meet her, until in time her very cold and distant manner towards me softened down, and we became good friends.

Louise Kenton was about six-and-twenty, and was a beauty. Her face was very fine—of a rich brown complexion, that flushed at times of excitement into a dark russet tint, such as we sometimes see in the clouds when the sun is setting angrily—and was encircled with a gleamy flow of black ripply hair, arranged in the mode we so much admire in the ancient statues of the splendid women of Greece. The full forehead came down almost straight to where the delicate classical nose sprang, almost overhanging indeed the lower part of the face, where the Cupid-bow-shaped lips concealed and yet displayed a row of perfect teeth. The chin was full and determined, and its nether line was drawn in direct to the throat, which sunk in well-defined lines into the rich black dress—the favourite costume of Miss Kenton. The wondrous eyes are far beyond my powers of description; I can only say I never saw such before, and dare not hope ever again to see their like.

Strong passion had left its mark on the magnificent face, and in addition there was a half sad expression, showing that some deep

sorrow was ever present to lend a melancholy charm to the thoughtful countenance. Proud she was, but with an evident scorn of her
own pride that hindered it from offending; distant and cold to
strangers, but warm, impulsive, and loving to her friends; free and
open as the day on those little personal matters about which her sex
is most reserved, but close and repelling concerning the more
tender objects of a woman's life; to me she was a sealed mystery
before she came to know that I was a married man, when she
thawed, as it were, in her manner, and I gradually became aware
that there existed some bar to future happiness, some concealing
of a sad story, some killing secret, that pressed upon her heavily
and burdened her glorious young life to the very earth.

Strange, she did not live with her brother, but with an aged aunt somewhere north of the Regent's Park; and on my remarking on the fact one day to Kenton his face assumed a troubled look (with which of late it had been too familiar) and muttered something about its being better that he and Louise should be as little together as possible—at least for the present.

One bleak raw February night I rang the bell, but must have forgotten to knock, for while waiting admittance I heard Miss Kenton's voice from within—loud and fierce in tone, but broken at times as though she sobbed. At length Abdoola opened the hall-door. From the adjacent parlour came a wild, passionate cry, and—'Oh, how I hate and dread and loathe him, Stanley! would to heaven he were dead!' Before I knew what he was about, Abdoola had opened the parlour-door and ushered me in.

Miss Kenton stood at her full height next the mantelpiece, her glorious hair all down, and her face, deadly pale, shone like the moon from out a mass of thunder-clouds. She glared at me for a moment like a tigress; then, pushing her inky locks back, came over, took my hand, and said faintly—trying to smile:

- 'Excuse me, Captain Murdell, but I am not well—we have had some trouble; Stanley will entertain you for a moment; 'and passed out of the room.
- 'I beg pardon, I am sure, Kenton,' said I; 'but Abdoola pushed me in without warning.'
- 'Oh, never mind, my dear fellow; only I am sorry you saw Louise in this way. Poor girl, her life is perfectly miserable, and I cannot find a way to help her.'
  - 'The old thing, I suppose—a love affair?'
- 'Well it is, and it isn't. I wish she would let me tell you all, and perhaps you could help us; but she—'

Miss Kenton re-entered the room. She was calm, her hair in order, and her dress arranged; but still she was very pale.

'I must ask your pardon, Captain Murdell, but we were talking over some unhappy family affairs that make me very wretched.'

'It is my place to apologise for my stupid intrusion,' was my answer; and an awkward pause ensued. Kenton at length spoke:

'Louise, dear; I've been thinking we ought perhaps to ask Murdell's help in our troubles. With my unfortunate eyes I am worse than useless. Suppose we tell him our sorrow?'

All the red blood had rushed to her face as he spoke, and she burst out:

- 'No, no, Stanley! What are you saying? I could not—never could bear it.'
- 'Well, well, be calm now, like a dear girl,' said Kenton, in a quieting voice. 'We need only tell him enough for obtaining his advice. He is too good a fellow to seek to know more.'

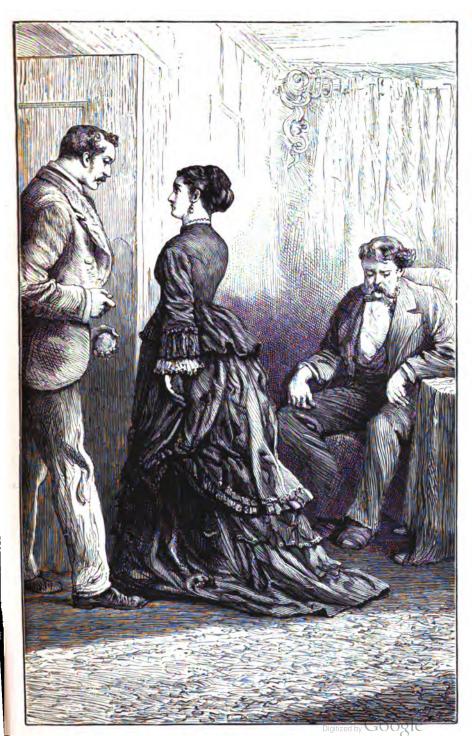
I nodded assent to this. There seemed to be an inward struggle going on in Miss Kenton's mind, and she paled and blushed rapidly, while two or three unnoticed tears dropped on her rich black dress as her brother, in a low tone, whose continuous murmur was very soothing, pointed out the great aid a real friend would be in her distress, and the boundless confidence he had in my honour and discretion. It was long before he could persuade her. The fine throat throbbed with excitement; heavy sighs shook her whole frame; and now the tears came fast and free. Rising, she crossed over, and looking me full in the eyes, the while she pressed my hand, said:

'I will take Stanley's advice, and trust myself implicitly to the honour of a soldier and a gentleman. But, Stanley,' she went on, turning towards him, 'I could not bear to be present. Tell him only as much as is necessary, and spare me as well as you can. I'll go home now. Good night, Stanley, dear! Good night, Captain Murdell, and—' again the fiery blood welled up to her very eyes—' and do not think too hardly of a most miserable woman.'

She left the room, and soon afterwards we heard her drive away.

Kenton rang the bell for some brandy-pani and cheroots, and made Abdoola remove the lamp, which, though very dim, he said hurt his eyes. But for the lighted ends of our cheroots we were in perfect darkness, and I was glad, as Kenton seemed nervous about what he should say.

'It is a sad case, this of Louise,' he began. 'She has got herself mixed up with a scoundrel whose very existence must be obnoxious to heaven and earth, and I can see no clear path before her.'



'DO NOT THINK TOO HARDLY OF A MOST MISERABLE WOMAN.'

'Excuse me for a moment; it is a delicate question; but there has been nothing wrong—nothing criminal—has there?'

'Oh, no, thank goodness! nothing of that sort; but I will tell you exactly how matters stand, and then you can judge what—if anything—it will be best to do.'

I will try and set down, as briefly as I can, what Kenton communicated at some length. The brother and sister had been left orphans at an early age, and had but very few relatives on earth. On my friend's departure for India, he placed his sister with Mrs. Birnleigh, an aunt residing at Southampton, not with any great belief in her fitness for the charge, but because she was the only person available. Louise Kenton had a considerable fortune that was to be entirely under her own control when she came of age, and in consequence became a fair mark for the many needy fortune-hunters frequenting her aunt's house. Amongst these, unfortunately for the hot-blooded young girl, was a certain Captain Danvers, who endeavoured by every means irrevocably to engage her affections. Now, Captain Danvers was a scoundrel, and at the same time one of those fascinating demons who seem to be born for no other purpose but to bring sorrow and shame on all connected with them. He had been in a Light Dragoon regiment, and left the service on account of a slight dispute (as he was pleased to say) with his brother officers concerning a play transaction. The exact circumstances were hushed up, as such affairs usually are, and nothing was clearly known of them at the club of which he was a member, and where he contrived after his -well, expulsion is an ugly word-retirement from the army to add considerably to his income by a judicious and guarded system of gambling. He was a strikingly handsome man, too, and you might travel a long day's journey without meeting his equal either in appearance or manner. A lithe, strongly-built figure did ample justice to his tailor's handiwork, and was of itself a guarantee that the man was by birth a gentleman, without taking into consideration the educated face that was impressive by its pale, intellectual beauty. Jet-black hair-fine, glittering, and cut to perfectionthrew out in strong relief the delicate white complexion; bright, beady eyes sparkling again, with good-humoured face; a row of teeth that was simply perfection; and, to crown all, a long, silky moustache, at once the envy of cornets and the delight of the fair young damsels who graced the salons of the milliners in the regions of the far West. Such was Captain Danvers outwardly: his inward semblance will be but too apparent before this narrative is complete.

He went to Southampton, saw poor Louise Kenton, and con-

quered almost without a blow. Then came a period of wild, mad, tempestuous love, on one side—and one side only; another period of excruciatingly happy suspense; a perjured declaration on the moon-lit deck of a fair yacht; a pause of unspeakable delight, still on one side only; a passionate acceptance: and Louise Kenton was engaged to one of the most consummate blackguards all England could produce.

Stanley Kenton was written to for his consent; in due course it came, and all was arranged for the wedding, when, like a thunderbolt, came down on the wretched girl the awful certainty that she had been deceived, that her lover was a most disreputable character, and, what was ten thousand times worse, that all the time of his love-making to her he had been engaged in a low, disgraceful amour almost at her very door.

The terror, the anguish, the remorse that ploughed up and devastated the fiery heart of the young girl were fearful in their effects; and only those who have witnessed in their own home-circles the awful results that a disappointed first-love has on an ardent temperament, can understand the whirlwind of passions that ravished and laid desolate that burning nature. The return of her numerous letters was demanded, and heartlessly refused by Danvers; Mrs. Birnleigh and her almost distracted niece left Southampton. and sought in the wilds of North London a seclusion that was as welcome as beneficial. Then came long, dull years of despairing apathy, when the girl's heart seemed to itself to have lost all power of loving, and she thought she could never look again on man with aught but the merest tolerance. In its turn, too, this sad state passed away, and, about a year before the time I am writing of, Nature commenced to resume her sway, and ere long the ardent desire which is planted in the bosom of every woman for something of her own to cherish and love re-asserted itself, and Louise Kenton once again fell in love.

Albert Tysdall was a fashionable young milk-and-water soldier of good family, thriving fortune, and in some respects a suitable match for Miss Kenton, whom he apparently loved with all the strength his spiritual constitution was capable of; but as that constitution was weak, so was his love, and of a nature that would be easily scared by any whisper that might in the very slightest degree tarnish the fair fame of its object; while, on her part, her stronger soul was more susceptible, and she was almost as much in love with young Tysdall as she had been in the bygone days with the worthless Danvers. The wedding was postponed until the expected arrival of my friend Stanley, whose unfortunate attack had befallen a short time previously, and in the meantime

Tysdall spent most of the hours when he could not be at the Regent's Park cottage, in the billiard-room of the 'Red Jacket' club, where he unfortunately made the acquaintance of Captain Danvers. Men of Tysdall's stamp are unluckily the most communicative beings in the world about their personal affairs, so that it was not long before his new friend was in possession of the facts of the intended marriage. A devilish smile passed across the face of the handsome captain when he heard the news, and he must have at once formed the resolution either to be a considerable gainer by the match, or to break it off altogether, for the very next morning a note was laid on Louise Kenton's breakfast plate. The sight of the well-known writing sent a shudder through her nerves; she opened and read the letter, and immediately swooned away. It ran thus:

Captain Danvers presents his compliments to Miss Kenton, and would congratulate her on her intended marriage, were it not that Captain D. holds many letters in which Miss Kenton promises in warm terms to marry him, and cannot consent to hold those promises annulled, but still presumes to consider himself the accepted suitor of Miss Kenton.

Lupus Street, Pimlico.

Three days afterwards Stanley arrived from India to find his unfortunate sister almost on the verge of insanity. She told him her whole story, and how she had, on recovering from her faint. feigned serious illness, to avoid seeing Tysdall, while she wrote to Danvers, imploring him to have mercy upon her—how the latter had coolly replied that he was too poor to 'lose his fair chances in life,' intimating further that if she wanted her letters she must 'pay for them,' or else he would feel obliged to show them to his friend Mr. Tysdall, and even, if necessary, take legal proceedings! Kenton at once saw the necessity of keeping apart from his sister. so as to be in a better position to aid her should opportunity offer (a report had got into the papers, and remained uncontradicted, that he had been killed during the expedition that had proved fatal to his eyes), and to gain time he vicariously managed to raise some technical difficulties about his sister's fortune which quite satisfied Tysdall that an indefinite postponement of the marriage would be necessary.

# CHAPTER II.

'But,' interrupted I, when Kenton had got so far in his story,— 'but what possible hold can Danvers have over your sister? for of course a man bringing an action for "breach of promise" would be laughed out of court.'

Kenton sighed heavily, and the dull red end of his cheroot flashed into a bright glow before he replied:

'Ah, my dear fellow! I knew you must ask that, and I suppose I must tell you, though poor Louise would go mad if she thought you knew; but you will be careful to keep your knowledge from her if I tell you?'

I gave the requisite promise, and Kenton went on.

'Well, you see she was very young, and is one of those fiery, passionate creatures who are quite carried away by their feelings, and I believe—she has given me to understand, indeed has told me—that she trusted so implicitly, nay, so worshipped, this vile scoundrel, that all the bundles of letters she wrote him are couched in the most foolish terms; in fact that there must be expressions in them of passionate affection that would kill her with shame if they were made public, and effectually and for ever estrange Albert Tysdall from her. And, as well as I can see, this Danvers is just the sort of determined ruffian who would take them into Court sooner than be baulked of his revenge—or money.'

This made the case serious; and I confess poor Miss Kenton's chances of a happy dénouement seemed to me to be at a minimum. I took a long meditative sip at my brandy-pani, but the action failed to produce any tangible idea.

'But how is it,' I asked after a pause, 'that he is allowed to remain a member of the "Red Jacket," if he is such a notorious gambler and general mauvais sujet?'

'My dear Murdell, have you not lived long enough in the world to know that men will stand a great deal from an objectionable acquaintance sooner than have the bore of getting rid of him? Besides, as long as he commits no flagrant fault, no one likes to take the first step towards belling the cat.'

'By Jove!' said I, 'if young Tysdall is such a weak-minded fool as you have told me, Danvers is sure to pluck him mercilessly, and then—'

'And then it would be worse for Louise. If he makes a penny he makes three hundred pounds a year at the club, and if he lost that he would only be all the harder on the poor girl.'

'Have you tried to get those letters in any way—a policeman, for instance?'

'I have,' answered Kenton; 'but all I could get out of the fellow was that Danvers constantly keeps them on his person; he dared not try and take them from him, so there is no hope from that quarter.'

'Well, well,' said I, in a complete fog, 'I can see no way out

of the mess just now, but if anything occurs to me you may be sure I will work it. By the way, does Danvers know you are at home?'

'He doesn't know I am alive even. The report of my death was never contradicted, and I know he heard and believed it at the time.'

'That's a good job, anyhow. If he thinks your sister is quite unprotected, he may come to the end of his tether sooner than you expect. I'd warn Tysdall, if I were you, not to mention your name. I suppose you could invent a reason to make him hold his tongue?'

'Oh, easily,' answered Kenton, 'that's one good point about him—he can be as silent as the grave about other people's affairs,

for he is thoroughly honourable.'

- 'Well do so, then; and now I'll be off home and think the whole matter over. Where can I get a light—I have forgotten my fusee-box?'
  - 'No, it is just behind your elbow.'
  - 'So it is. Why how on earth did you know that?'
- 'Well,' he answered with some hesitation, 'I heard it rattle; besides, I can see a little when there is no glare of light; it is an effect of snow and moon-blindness not unknown to the profession. But if you must go, Abdoola shall fetch you a cab.'

In a few moments I was on my way home and pondering deeply over the story I had heard.

One lovely spring day, when West-end London was commencing to shake off the sluggish torpor of winter dullness, I sauntered into the smoking-room of the Red Jacket club to meet Albert Tysdall, with whom of late I had cultivated a close intimacy. That young man was reclining on one of the crimson-velvet lounges, amusing himself with a cigar, some seltzer-and-sherry, and the latest addition to his private library—a neatly got-up betting-book.

'Ah, Murdell, how-de-do? Seen Danvers anywhere about?'

'Just come from his rooms. He will be down here shortly. Some fellows came in, so I left him. How does your book stand?'

'Tol-lol. I picked up some first-rate bets this week. Danvers put me on one or two good things that will pay. He's a sharp fellow, for all his innocent looks.'

'Ah, he is a good fellow, and one a man can trust,' replied I—the lie almost choking me.

'Trust! I believe you; that is, if you are a real friend of his. But he can show a spice of the devil too, can Master D. I, for one, would be uncommonly sorry to be on the wrong side of the fence with him, I know.'

Well, you are pretty close chums now; but take care you

don't burn your fingers.'

'Oh, you may be easy on that score. We are going "joint stock" on this season's racing: and, by Jove, it is a lucky thing for me to have some fellow sharp at figures! I can get the right bets, but I am the deuce and all at accounts.'

'Ah, well, you're in luck,' was my reply; 'and you'll want some money by the time the wedding comes off. Is the day fixed?'

'No; Stanley Kenton says there is some legal bother that will delay it some time. I am not very sorry, for I have been going a little too fast of late, and expect to pull up a bit on the turf. I am precious low now.'

'Too much of the "flats," eh?'

'Well, yes. I have dropped a good deal to that fellow Mockridge. Danvers is always warning me against him, but we can't well break with him, as he is an old schoolfellow and all that sort of thing of Danvers's. Besides, he can't play a bit, but has the luck of old Nick. Do you ever play?'

'My dear fellow, I haven't money to throw away, like you men of the jeunesse dorée. About five pounds a-year cover my gam-

bling.'

'Well, but look here,' said Tysdall earnestly, rising from the lounge; 'come over to my rooms to-night after the opera. Danvers and Mockridge will be there, and I'll go you halves in winnings or losings. Just once in a way, will you?'

'Hum,' I slowly replied, 'I don't mind if I do; but don't blame

me if you're let in.'

'Oh, not I; and if you win I shall be awfully glad, for I hate seeing Mockridge actually coining money night after night. Shall we have a game of billiards?'

I agreed, and we adjourned up-stairs. We had played for some time when Danvers came in, accompanied by Mr. Mockridge, who struck me as being one of the most repulsive-looking fellows I had ever beheld.

- 'Hullo, young men!' was Danvers's salutation spoken in a loud cheery voice, while a perfect smile of bonhomie lit up his handsome face; 'gambling at this hour of the morning! This is pretty work. Well, how is the game going? Who has won what, how much, and all about it?'
  - 'This is our third; we are five all,' I answered.

'I say, let us have a four-game. Mockridge and I will play you two for a couple of sovs. apiece.'

'Wouldn't you like it?' laughed Tysdall. 'No; let Murdell

and Mockridge go partners.'

I wanted to see something of this Mr. Mockridge, and consented, though not without considerable misgivings; and the game commenced. We played the usual army way of turn and turn about; and as we proceeded the sides seemed pretty equal, for while I was a few points better than Tysdall, my partner was not quite a match for Danvers's more open and showy game.

We won the first, our opponents the second, and were proceeding with the third when Mockridge proposed that the bets should be raised to ten pounds apiece, and then leave off. I did not like to object, and the play began in earnest. I noticed how keenly Danvers and Mockridge watched one another; and once the former must have noticed something amiss, for he remarked, laughing, 'Why, Mockridge, your sleeve is too loose, man!' But at the same time a fierce side-glance shot from the bright eyes, completely cowing my partner, who after that had no more accidents.

'Five pounds you don't win this stroke,' cried out Tysdall excitedly, as a very difficult red hazard was left on the balls for Mockridge at the close of the game.

'It is quite three to one against my making it. Lay me fifteen sovs. to five?'

'All right; done with you,' cried Tysdall, regardless of the half-warning glance Danvers gave him.

'Done.' And Mockridge chalked his cue, spat out the end of his cigar, bent cautiously over the table, and with the greatest ease made the stroke, and won the game.

'Confound it! What a lucky beggar you are, Mockridge! But I'll take it out of you at the "flats." Murdell is coming over to-night, and we'll see if we can't make you disgorge some of that money, my boy.'

When they heard this announcement Danvers and Mockridge looked with sharp suspicion simultaneously at me, and then at one another; but I suppose my mild, not to say meek, appearance must have reassured them, for they both declared they would be happy to join the party. And so, after sundry bank-notes had been passed across the green cloth, we separated.

# CHAPTER III.

That afternoon I dropped in at Kenton's, and found him in very low spirits about his sister, who, he said, was pining after Tysdall, on whom she had bestowed the whole wealth of her second love, and feared he was going to the bad at the club. I reassured him as well as my conscience would permit; and then he asked

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me if I was certain Tysdall had not mentioned to Danvers anything of his return from India?

- 'No, I am sure he hasn't,' I answered; 'and what is more, he doesn't let him even talk about the marriage now. The other day, Danvers, in my presence, asked him, with a devilish leer, when he was to be turned off—"do the virtuous"—see? Tysdall flared up with anger, and then, in a dignified way I hardly hoped to see, said there would probably be considerable delay about his wedding pending family arrangements, but that he could not allow any joking on such a subject, and must request Captain Danvers not to allude to it again. Danvers laughed it off, but you may depend upon it he is too knowing a hand to frighten his bird by ever again ruffling his feathers in that way. But, strange enough, he asked me one day if I had ever met you in India.'
  - 'Well, and what did you say?' eagerly questioned Kenton.
- 'Oh, I said I thought I had met you at Delhi. Did he mean a half botany-mad sort of fellow, who had got himself killed in a scientific expedition on the Snowy Range? He laughed out one of those cold-blooded laughs of his, and said, "Yes, that must be the man;" and so the matter dropped.'
- 'That was a lucky hit; but don't you think that Danvers may have Loo watched?'
- 'Yes, I do; in fact, if I was you, I would try to persuade her to leave town altogether for some time: it would be safer; eh?'
- 'Jove! so it would. We have some distant relatives at Ilfracombe, who have often asked her: I think I'll send her down there, and if young Tysdall stops in town Danvers will fear nothing.'
- 'Do so: and now I must be off. Good-bye, old man; keep up your spirits and all will go well.'

I met Albert Tysdall at eight outside the Opera-house, and found that young swell had provided a box for the occasion, in the snuggest corner of which I ensconced myself. The piece was Don Giovanni, and we were revelling in the enjoyment of the delicious music when, to my disgust, Danvers and his satellite friend joined us, and put an end to any hopes I might have had of a quiet study of Mozart's masterpiece. Though annoyed by the interruption I could not help being almost fascinated by the pleasant charm of Danvers's manner, and the apparently genuine mode in which he seemed to throw himself and lead others into a hearty appreciation of the glittering scene and the delicious music. He appeared to know something about every one in the house, from the Grand Duke of Boshenstein—who was accommodated with a seat in the Royal box—to timid little Miss Perkins, squeaking her best in the chorus, in all the hopes and fears of a first season's engagement;

and he rattled on in a lively witty style, and with such a perfectly true ring—looking so honest, good-hearted, and gloriously handsome the while—that I ceased to wonder at the numbers who I was aware had fallen into his ever-spread glittering nets. Mockridge was quite the reverse; looking precisely what he was—a pernicious villain, whose very face warned bystanders against its owner. He was one of those dark, beetle-browed, vicious-mouthed men, on whom open and vile passion has set its irredeemable stamp, and who bear the brand of their cunning and deceit undisguised before mankind.

When the curtain fell we adjourned to Tysdall's apartments. A cosy little supper was ready prepared for us, and the foamy champagne was tolerably punished by two of the party—Mockridge and Tysdall—while Danvers and I were more abstemious. The latter pressed me repeatedly to drink, even feigning deep draughts himself, so that I was in a manner compelled to swallow much more wine than was my usual habit, lest too great abstinence might raise the suspicion that I had come rather to watch than to play. Soon the cards were produced, and we sat down to écarté.

'How shall we play-a pool or what?' asked Danvers.

'Oh, the usual game—"one down, t'other come on," is far preferable to sides,' answered Mockridge, unpapering a pack of cards and manipulating them with the dexterity of a juggler.

We cut the cards; Danvers and I to play first, Mockridge to cover the stakes and play the winner, Tysdall in turn to stake an equal amount to what would be then on the table, and play the second winner for the sum total—was the result; with the proviso that the order of playing was to be reversed the second round so as to equalise every one's chances.

'R. M. D., of course?' said Tysdall.

'What may those letters stand for?' I asked in my simplicity.

'Ready money down, my boy. There's my sov.—cut for deal —I win,' said Danvers, cutting the queen to my knave.

We played and Danvers won in a canter. Mockridge covered the two sovereigns on the table, carefully dealt, and in a cautious game beat his opponent by steady play.

'There you are again, Mockridge; that killing slowness of your play is always too much for me,' said Danvers, sipping his champagne and leaning back in his chair to watch the contest between Tysdall and Mockridge for the eight sovereigns to which the stakes had now mounted. Mockridge again won, and pocketed the eight pounds with a grim smile. In the second and third rounds Tysdall and myself were equally unlucky, and at the end of an hour or so we had both lost considerably.

- 'What an unlucky pair you fellows are—shall we leave off for to-night?' suggested Danvers.
- 'I'm agreeable,' I answered. 'It is awfully close in this room, four cigars quite fill it with smoke.'
- 'Oh, nonsense! There, that's better,' and Tysdall threw up one of the windows. 'Try some of that "fizz," Murdell, it'll cool you. Or stay, my fellow has some ice in the house, and he's first-rate at Roman-punch. Touch the bell, will you, Mockridge?'
- 'By Jove, the very thing to set us going!' responded that worthy as he balanced himself back on the hind legs of his chair and jerked at the bell.
  - 'Yes, sir!'
  - 'Any ice in the house, Bender?'
  - ' Yes, sir.'
  - ' Make a good brew of Roman-punch as soon as you can.'
  - ' All right, sir.'
- 'And, Bender!' shouted Danvers after the retiring valet, 'don't make it too strong.'
- 'Let us have another hand while waiting. Some champagne, Mockridge? you look thirsty.'

Danvers flirted a new pack of cards across the green cloth. 'Cut for fresh turns.'

I was more lucky the next few rounds, or rather suspected I was allowed to win, though for the life of me I could not understand how the cards seemed to obey the will of their masters. Tysdall lost steadily, and evidently did not like it; while I could see that the champagne was beginning to tell on him; and, indeed, I was becoming aware that I, too, had taken quite enough.

Roman-punch is a seductive beverage. It glides across the tongue, leaving a delicate icy flavour of delight utterly unaccompanied by the slightest roughness that, as in any other strong drinks, might warn the imbiber to temper pleasure with discretion. seems to be only a sweet heaven-composed draught from Olympus -a delicious gift from the gods to weary mortals sated with other pleasures or exhausted in the mazy dance-a love-cup, where fair tender maidens may sip and sip, and be refreshed and invigorated, and yet feel none of the consequences of indulgence in wine-while in reality it is a potent liquor that may not be too deeply dipped into even by strong men; an insidious deceiver; a wolf in sheep's clothing; a dread poison concealed in the daintiest surroundings; and woe betide any misguided nymph who, fevered with the waltz, and faint with the excitement, the press and turmoil of the ball, allows too frequent potions of this insinuating drink to flow unheeded down her parched throat. It cools, and yet it fires; it ex-

cites the blood and the brain for the time to the highest point; and then its effects alter, and low deadness of blood, stupor, and prostration of brain supervene.

The brew made by Bender was simply delicious, and I indulged in long and repeated draughts to quench the appalling thirst the smoking and heat of the room had induced.

- 'Ah, you wanted that—it does a fellow good to see a man take a real hearty pull at his liquor,' remarked Danvers as he slowly sipped at his glass, making every icy drop linger as it passed the palate, and drawing as much coolness out of as small an amount of the refreshing drink as was possible.
  - 'I'm tired of this; aren't you, Danvers?'
- 'Well, I am, but it is hardly fair to Tysdall to leave off yet, as you and I have won so much, Mockridge, eh?'
- 'Oh, let us have another go in before we break up. What do you say, Murdell?'
  - 'Well, I don't mind if we do.'
- 'Let us leave off this beastly écarté and have a turn at lansquenet,' suggested Danvers.
  - "" Barkis is willing "-but I don't know the game."
- 'Oh, there's nothing in it,' eagerly put in Mockridge, proceeding to explain to me the mere 'pitch and toss' game that goes by such a high sounding name. To tell the truth the previous champagne and the Roman-punch were beginning to tell on my unaccustomed head, and I felt careless as to what I did, and went into the game with a zest and eagerness that surprised even myself. At first we played quietly enough, but after a time the heat, cigars, and constant applications to the enthralling seducer began to work on us all, but more especially on Tysdall and myself, and I found we were both playing wildly and recklessly; with this difference, that while my pile of gold hardly, if at all, diminished, Tysdall's had constantly to be replenished from his desk in the adjoining room, and as every time he got up and sat down again the Roman-punch was applied to, he was manifestly becoming intoxicated, while I myself was conscious of a curious chance-medley of colours and forms I could not account for. I found a vast fund of amusement, too, in every little event of the game, being seized with the most uncontrollable fits of tear-inducing laughter at almost every word or action of my companions. Presently the lamps appeared to burn dim and be going out, then they blazed up again brighter than ever; and as this seemed to happen two or three times running, I laughed consumedly and the others laughed too, except Tysdall, who glared furiously at me-but he was certainly tipsy, so I generously forgave him, and only laughed the more as he cursed his luck. My gold kept

on increasing, and I was in the act of counting it, when I found my-self getting very sleepy—never being able to remember beyond ten sovereigns, when I had to begin all over again. Danvers sat next me—or rather a sort of misty double-Danvers—laughing and joking me about my stupid play that always won while he lost, and making Mockridge grin like a huge baboon with rage as he remarked how the latter 'pouched' his gold, and never left more than a few sovereigns on the table.

Tysdall looked as black as night, scowled at me every now and again, and was evidently savagely drunk. Then I nodded off to sleep, but it was an uncomfortable sort of rest, as I had to be 'prodded' up every now and then by Danvers to play in my turn. Presently Tysdall got up again, staggering across towards his desk and then went into the next room, and I hoped he would be a long time, for my head was so heavy that I leant it down on the table to have a nap. It seemed to me a whole night when I felt a sharp kick on the shin from Danvers's boot as he got up to lean across the table, but I was far too drowsy to lift my throbbing head.

- 'What's he fumbling about in there?' whispered Danvers.
- 'Hush! that chap'll hear you.'
- 'Not he—he's as fast as an owl, drunk as Bacchus; what's the figure?'
- 'Between a hundred and a hundred and fifty, I think. He's gone for more.'
- 'Hush! Here he is. Leave off. It's enough for a night;' and I heard and felt Danvers sinking into his chair beside me.
- 'Jove! I'm clean out. Sh' we play on I.O.U.s?' stuttered Tysdall, as he dropped into his chair with an idiotic laugh.
- 'Well, really I don't think we ought to. You and I are the losers. Besides, Murdell here——'The words seemed to die dreamily away, and some muttered words of 'revenge'—'afterwards'— 'in the morning'—were all I heard as I dropped off to sleep, hazily wondering what Tysdall wanted to revenge on me.

A precipitous flight of stairs that seemed to have no bottom—a gush of deliciously cooling air—a climbing and scrambling, and holding on to a velvet mountain behind a horse—a clatter and roar of wheels and harness like a troop of horse-artillery charging through my brain—a glare and twinkling of many lamps and bulls'-eyes—a thundering rapping at a door—another flight of steps, to ascend this time—a soft cool valley of sweet-scented sheets—an indistinct voice like Danvers's, muttering, 'Good night, old fellow, better in the morning,'—a great palpable and oppressive darkness, as though a whole eternity were coming down on earth—and unconsciousness.

## Lord Macaulay.

THE lives of some men, Goethe has said, remind us in their progress of the sudden changes and the violent turns of a lottery; the lives of others, of the successive stages in the gradual solution of a mathematical problem. It is to the latter of these two classes that the character and career of Macaulay must be referred. haps the strongest feeling left upon the mind after a perusal of his recently published biography is that, from the cradle to the grave, the course of Macaulay's development was singularly free from all surprises, and was, in its logical continuity, unbroken. greatness by a natural process of organic growth. He became an extraordinary man because he was an extraordinary child. youth and his maturity were distinguished because his infancy was distinguished. Macaulay aged five is the intellectual microcosm of the Macaulay aged fifty. The letters which he wrote to his parents from school when he was twelve, and from college seven or eight years later, are in spirit and in manner the same as he wrote to his sister, Lady Trevelyan, when he was famous. Jeffrey expressed, in tones of gratified admiration, his inability to pronounce where and how Macaulay acquired his special gift of words and form of thought—his entire style. According to the epistolary evidence contained in Mr. Trevelyan's work, this style was really part of his intellectual nature. He improved it, he enriched it with the results of reading. It strengthened with his strength. and it mellowed with his age. But it was in him from the first. He could read as soon as he could speak, and the consequence was that his nursery lispings were cast in the phraseology of At the age of seventeen he had completely assimilated all the elements of his literary diction, and nothing remained but to elaborate and to perfect his inestimable gift.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say of Macaulay that he read without serious intermission from the day of his birth to the day of his death. 'I was talking yesterday,' writes Greville, under date February 9, 1836, 'with Stephen about Brougham and

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Macaulay. He said he had known Brougham above thirty years, and well remembers walking with him down to Clapham to dine with old Zachary Macaulay, and telling him he would find a prodigy of a boy there of whom he must take notice. This was Tom Macaulay. Brougham afterwards put himself forward as the monitor and director of the education of Macaulay, and I remember hearing of a letter he wrote to the father on the subject which made a great noise at the time; but' he was like the man who brought up a young lion, which finished by biting his head off.' The two things chiefly noticeable for their influence upon his after life in Macaulay's childhood are the varied and substantial literary nutriment which fed an intellectual precocity not less remarkable than that of John Stuart Mill, and the moral atmosphere and examples by which the days of his infancy and boyhood were surrounded. From the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. 'He did not care for toys, but was very fond of taking his walk, when he would hold forth to his companions, whether nurse or mother, telling interminable stories out of his own head, or repeating what he had been reading in language far above his years.' At the age of eight he could repeat the whole of Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel' by heart from a single reading. Whatever he heard or saw in print was at once indelibly engraved upon the tablets of his mind. 'A mere glance,' wrote Greville, thus curiously confirming the testimony of Mr. Trevelyan, that he seemed to read through the pores of his skin, 'is enough for Macaulay: for, by some process impossible to other men, he contrives to transfer the contents of the books he reads to his own mind, where they are deposited, always accessible, and never either forgotten or confused.' Sir James Stephen said that, 'If Macaulay's life were ever written by a competent biographer, it will appear that he had displayed feats of memory which he believed to be unequalled by any human being.' This is strong language: but in his record of the childhood and the manhood of his uncle Mr. Trevelyan has demonstrated that it is not the language of exaggeration.

And then, not only were these great gifts of nature exercised and strengthened by practice and reading, but Macaulay was from the first stimulated to uncommon industry by the spectacle of what was every day taking place around him. Idleness and ease were unknown in the household of Zachary Macaulay. United in their determination to leave nothing undone that human energy and effort could accomplish utterly to put down the slave-trade, he

and Wilberforce laboured together as men have seldom laboured before. 'It is easy to trace whence the great bishop and the great writer derived their immense industry. Working came as naturally as walking to sons who could not remember a time when their fathers idled. . . . Fortitude, and diligence, and selfcontrol, and all that makes men good and great, cannot be purchased from professional education. Charity is not the only quality which begins at home. The child will never place his aims high and pursue them steadily unless the parent has taught him what energy and elevation of purpose mean, not less by example than by precept.' The philanthropic object of this indefatigable labour and the personnel of the toilers themselves naturally supplied an additional incentive and a fresh force to the ambition of the young Macaulay. His father's house was the meeting-place of all the distinguished men engaged in the great movement; his father's intimate friends included Brougham, Francis Horner, Sir James Mackintosh, Chateaubriand, Sismondi, the Duc de Broglie, Madame de Staël, and Dumont, the French interpreter of Bentham. But while there was everything, calculated to energise or ennoble, in the home associations of Macaulay, the system under which he was educated was not without defects and drawbacks that continued to make themselves felt to the end of his days. It was a real misfortune for Macaulay that he should have been bred up at a small private school. Had he been sent to one of the great public schools, he would probably have learned that easy conciliatory manner towards his equals, that art to conceal his own supreme consciousness of his great parts, which would have qualified him to shine as a statesman, and which would have enabled him to feel, as he never completely felt, at home in the House of Commons. When he went to Cambridge it was too late to supply this deficiency. Macaulay's gifts were so undeniable, so dazzling, and so fruitful, that, with his appreciative contemporaries—and intellectual appreciation is a sentiment thoroughly known to undergraduates, but imperfectly known to schoolboys—they carried all before them.

We are indeed assured by Mr. Trevelyan, whose panegyric is as untempered by criticism as his biography is interesting and complete, that no man was ever so little of an egotist as Lord Macaulay. So to his own immediate relatives he may have appeared, but so he did not appear to his friends and contemporaries, and so he will not appear to those who construct their portrait of him from the materials which his nephew has so abundantly supplied. It may very well be that his parents endeavoured conscientiously not to betray their sense of the extraordinary

endowments of one who was emphatically animosus infans. But the child himself could not have failed to take more or less accurately the measure of his own powers; and at Eton or at Harrow he would assuredly have been prevented from asserting his conviction of this estimate in a manner which was clearly impossible within the limits of the home circle. His father did his utmost to rebuke and remedy the faults of his son. He dwells in a letter on his aversion 'to loud and noisy tones and self-confident, overwhelming, and yet perhaps very unsound arguments. But,' he adds, 'you will remember how anxiously I dwelt upon this point while you were at home. I have been in hopes that this half-year would witness a great change in you in this respect;' and then Zachary Macaulay proceeds to say how these hopes have been damped. 'I do,' he concludes, 'long and pray most earnestly that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit may be substituted for vehemence and self-confidence, and that you may be as much distinguished in the former as you ever have been for the latter.' Whether or not that prayer was answered it is for those who knew Macaulay's conversation, or who ponder the letters and diaries contained in Mr. Trevelyan's volumes, to say. On one point the evidence of Greville is distinctly favourable to Mr. Trevelyan's view. 'His manner,' wrote the diarist, in a description of a Holland House dinner, at which he wonders who the 'common-looking man in black' can be, finally settling that he was some obscure man of letters or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor, 'struck one as not pleasing, but it was not assuming, unembarrassed vet not easy, unpolished yet not coarse; there was no kind of usurpation of the conversation, no tenacity as to opinion or facts, no assumption of superiority; but the variety and contrast of his information were soon apparent; for whatever subject was touched upon, he evinced the utmost familiarity with it; quotation, illustration, anecdote seemed ready in his hands for every topic.' As a matter of fact, Macaulay's correspondence and journals are triumphs of self, and nothing else. Perhaps no man ever penned so many letters or such copious records of his daily doings, and had so little to say about his contemporaries. Here and there we find the names of the distinguished people, whom he met habitually, introduced. Now and again he tells us what were his relations with Brougham, and how the ill feeling between them arose. But on the whole incredibly little is written which is not purely personal to the writer. Macaulay's correspondence exhales the spirit of self-consciousness and self-love at every turn. In each of his countless communications with Macvey Napier, editor of the 'Edinburgh Review,' in which he has occasion to

allude to any contribution of his own as in course of preparation, he takes care to say that be believes it will be 'a hit,' or 'more than commonly good;' while, in speaking to a relative or friend of a number of the 'Review' which happens to be without an article from his pen, he is careful to remark, 'I quite agree with the publishers, the editor, and the reading public generally, that the number would have been much better for an article of thirty or forty pages from the pen of a gentleman who shall be nameless.' It may not improperly be urged that such observations as these are half playful and are wholly private, and that it is not fair to base upon them a charge of deliberate egotism against Macaulay. But when we find, as has been already said, that he ignores all persons, however famous, with whom he was not intimately associated; that he only alludes twice to Dickens, whose 'American Notes' he was asked and declined to review for the 'Edinburgh;' that he merely mentions Bulwer to say that he has met him; that on the rank and file of his contemporaries in literature, society, and politics he is almost entirely silent, and yet that he writes so voluminously and so minutely about himself, his feelings, and his intentions—how is it possible to avoid feeling that an egotist in the ordinary sense of the word is exactly what Macaulay was? This is a charge which by no means implies that of an arrogant self-conceit. Macaulay of course knew his own value, but he was entirely free from that sort of egotism which could be stigmatized as dictatorial or contemptuous. On the contrary, his belief in and his devotion to himself was neither unpleasing nor unamusing. Nor was it incompatible with great and systematic generosity; with an extreme and beautiful attachment to his family; with a sympathy in which there was no affectation, and a softness of nature in which there was nothing maudlin. It may well seem strange at first that a man who was so admirably adapted to family life, and so amenable to the charms and delights of home affections, should have never married. But, in truth, the intensity or the tenderness of the love that he had in especial for his sisters, and that is testified by hundreds of letters in Mr. Trevelyan's volumes, would seem to have monopolised his entire being.

The son of one of the 'straitest of the sect of Claphamites, it is not surprising that when Macaulay went to Cambridge he was a Tory almost as 'rigid and unbending' as was Mr. Gladstone, whom he subsequently criticised. His first speeches delivered at the Union Debating Club were strongly monarchical and conservative. But he formed an intimate acquaintance with Charles Austin, which had an influence upon him, powerful and fruitful, to

a degree that even Mr. Trevelyan can scarcely appreciate. Austin was a contemporary undergraduate at Jesus, a young man of great ability, of extensive knowledge, and of exceedingly broad principles both in politics and religion. In each of these respects he acquired complete dominion over Macaulay's mind. The natures of the two were wholly different. Austin was hard, cold, dry, utterly void of imagination or fancy. Macaulay was all fire and brilliancy. Every sentence was a rhetorical flourish, and he naturally seemed to speak in a dialect that can only be described as poetic. Union Club was the arena in which they exercised their powers. and where they realised their hopes of gaining an important influence over the minds of the undergraduates. 'These speeches,' writes one who heard them often and remembers them well, 'were most remarkable; Austin instructing his audience in the mysteries of Mill and Ricardo, and Macaulay throwing the brilliancy of his dazzling eloquence over every fact and principle of history. When the debate was over they collected a chosen number of members of the Club, with whom they supped. Very delightful those suppers were, but no one seemed to enjoy the feast of reason and the flow of soul so heartily as Macaulay. One of the supper party, who possessed considerable powers of mimicry, used to entertain the company by imitating the speakers whom they had just heard in the formal discussion. Macaulay was so tickled with this amusement, that he requested the "Momus of the Red Lion" to take him off, giving as a reason for his request that speakers can find out their faults by seeing themselves mimicked.

The 'Momus of the Red Lion' was the Rev. W. G. Cookesley, the learned, accomplished, and genial editor of Pindar, formerly for twenty years a master at Eton, and now a Bedfordshire rector. Some of these mimetic improvisations have been preserved and are contained in a little tract entitled the 'Union Club,' published at Cambridge in 1823, now before me. The speakers whose style is reproduced are Patterson, Stapylton, Bulwer, Ryeland, Ord, Praed, Churchill, Macaulay; and the utterances of each are introduced by some lines of Praed, the following stanza being prefixed to the whole:—

The Union Club, of rhetorical fame,
Was held at the Red Lion Inn,
But there never was lion so perfectly tame
Or who made such a musical din.
'Tis pleasant to snore at a quarter before,
When the chairman does nothing in state,
But 'tis heaven, 'tis heaven, to waken at seven,
And pray for a noisy debate.

This is the verse which precedes the burlesque harangue of Macaulay:—

But the favourite comes with his trumpets and drums, With his arms and his metaphors crost: And the audience, oh dear! vociferate 'hear!' Till they're half of them deaf as a post.

The honourable gentleman, after making the grand tour in a hand canter, touching cursorily upon Rome, Constantinople, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, and the Red Sea, with two quotations, two or three hundred similes, and two or three hundred thousand metaphors, proceeds as follows; and the parody is so excellent that part of it at least may be quoted here:—

'We, Mr. President, have indeed awful examples to direct us or to deter. Have we not seen the arms of the mighty overpowered, and the counsels of the wise confounded? Have not the swords of licentious conquest and the fasces of perverted law covered Europe with blood, and tears, and mourning? Have not priests and princes and nobles been driven in beggary and exile to implore the protection of rival thrones and hostile altars? Where is the sacred magnificence of Rome? where the wealth and independence of Holland? where the proud titles of the German Cæsars? where the mighty dynasty of Bourbon? We know too well the oratory of these Sheffield meetings and the orgies of these midnight clubs; we have seen the weapons which arm and the spirit which nerves them; we have heard the hyæna howl till the raving which excited dismay provokes nothing but disgust. Amid the railings of disappointed ambition and the curses of factious hate; amid the machinations of the foully wicked, and the sophistries of the would-be wise-we will cling to our fathers' banner, and will rally round our native rock. Mr. President, that banner is the charter of our rights, that rock is the British Constitution.'

Macaulay's pre-eminence among and over his contemporaries at Cambridge was allowed by all, and when it is remembered that those contemporaries included such men as Airy (the Astronomer Royal), Sir A. Cockburn, Archbishop Trench, Tennyson, Kemble, Praed, Moultrie, Kennedy (the present Professor of Greek at Cambridge), Malden (Greek Professor at London University), Charles Buller, and Charles Austin, the magnitude of the compliment paid him will be understood.

The tender-heartedness and generosity which Macaulay displayed in all the private relations of life are a curious contrast to the bitterness of his literary and political attacks. In his review of James Mill's 'Essay on Government,' he treated the author with such contemptuous vehemence of vituperation, that he felt compelled to withdraw the article from publication, and even to volunteer an apology for his language. Mill, however, was a political offender, and political controversy seems to demand, if not to justify, intemperate rancour and licence of tongue. Robert Montgomery was really a minnow among poetical sinners,

whereas Macaulay was a triton among critics. The only explanation of the tremendous and elaborate annihilation to which this Bavius among bards was subjected by this Leviathan among reviewers is that Macaulay felt a real pleasure in the operation. It is as if John Hunter had summoned the whole College of Surgeons, with a great noise of trumpets, to witness his dissection of a flea. The precedent was in every way a bad one; for when literary warfare is carried on after this tomahawk fashion, it gives unfortunate and disastrous opportunity to the unlearned and ignorant to assail literature with hatred and contempt. Nor is Macaulay's castigation, superfluously insulting and needlessly personal as that castigation was, of Wallis, the editor of Mackintosh's 'James II.,' altogether creditable. It was a melancholv acknowledgment to make that he had 'attacked Mr. Wallis with an asperity which neither literary defects nor speculative difference can justify, and which ought to be reserved for offenders against the laws of morality and honour.' This acknowledgment, it may be mentioned, was made only when Wallis was dead. Wallis had challenged Macaulay on his return from India, but the quarrel was arranged by Lord Strafford in a manner which would not have been deemed satisfactory by the duellists of the Regency, but which was certainly adroit, even though, as we read Mr. Trevelyan's account of it, it seems exceedingly absurd.

It was probably devotion to his political creed rather than personal feeling which prompted Macaulay to paint the picture of the great moralist, who identified the first Whig with the devil, that will descend to posterity as his true and living portrait. But Dr. Johnson's moral elevation and native dignity should have protected him, his infirmities and defects notwithstanding, from what must be pronounced to be a gross and even malignant carica-'Everything about him,' so runs Macaulay's description of Boswell's hero; 'his coat, his face, his figure, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite, his fish sauce and veal pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts when he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his gruntings, his mutterings, his puffings,' &c .- these may be traits whose enumeration intensifies the reality and effect of the sketch, but they read like taunts, and, coming from Macaulay, their taste and felicity cannot be commended. It would be possible and it would be easy to draw a picture of Macaulay not one whit less absurd than this. Every eccentricity, deformity, or ungainliness

of Johnson's would merely be a set-off against a corresponding defect in his critic. Macaulay was said by one of his most intimate friends to resemble nothing so much as 'a thick-set squab drummer,' and he himself was perfectly aware of his own awkwardness and absence of all personal grace. He could neither drive, ride, shoot, nor fish. When he was in attendance as Secretary of State on the Queen at Windsor, on being told that a horse was at his disposal, he observed, 'If her Majesty wishes to see me ride, she must order out an elephant.' Mr. Trevelyan tells us that his clothes were always vilely put on, that he could do nothing which required nicety of touch, and that he never used a razor without gashing his cheeks. Again, it is neither generous nor humorous to jeer at Johnson because he enjoyed ungracefully his food, seeing that Johnson had gone for years with scarcely any meal worthy of the name of dinner, and that his caricaturist himself was a man -witness the innumerable allusions in his letters and diaries to banquets and particular dishes, and the account he gives of a little feast to which he invited his alter ego, Mr. Ellis, consisting of curried lobster, woodcock, and other dainties-who had a robust appetite, and was something of a bon vivant. Nor, seeing that Macaulay upon one occasion occupied the whole time of the assembled company at Lord Lansdowne's in a discussion with Charles Austin from breakfast to dinner, and that he would when in the humour willingly talk from evening to morning; that Sydney Smith, when describing the visit which the young Edinburgh Reviewer paid him at his Yorkshire rectory, said, in reply to the question how he got on with Macaulay?' Get on? I do not get on at all. He never gave me a chance: he talked all day, and I dare say all night; but, happily, during that part of the time I was asleep. I paid him off, however, at last—when I put him into the stage coach. I laid my hand upon his knee, and said in my most serious tone, "Let me, as an older man, give you a bit of advice. Let nobody persuade you that you are not the first man in England" -seeing, in a word, that Macaulay's personal peculiarities were as grotesque as they were numerous, does the banter that he aims at Johnson's unreasonable and persistent loquacity, his ravenous capacity for food, and the inelegant manner in which he disposed of it, come particularly well?

His attacks upon Croker, who upon one occasion, in a debate on the Reform Bill, got decidedly the best of him, are reasonable enough,—though here, as elsewhere, he shows that it is the man whom he desires to destroy rather than the error which he wants to correct. There is one mistake into which Croker fell that is worth while noticing, because it suggests a critical blunder of

Macaulay's quite as unpardonable. Croker had misunderstood the word θυπτός, which he translated as the 'dead.' Macaulay, commenting on this, wrote, 'No schoolboy could venture to use the word in the sense which Mr. Croker ascribes to it without imminent danger of a flogging.' Yet the same sense had been given to it by every editor and commentator of Euripides till the time of Heath. Such censure is extravagantly high-handed, and the question naturally arises whether Macaulay himself was infallible in matters of pure scholarship. He was nothing of the kind. We read in this Life, that he maintained it was impossible to understand the third and fourth odes of the Third Book of Horace. on account of the violent transitions of subject, which he assumes were mechanically reproduced from Pindar, who, after having described so many boxing-matches, was glad to get on to something better. But of these two odes, the first, that beginning with the line, 'Justum et tenacem propositi virum,' was notoriously written to dissuade Augustus from the intention, always more or less cherished by the Romans, of removing the seat of empire from Rome to Troy; an intention which, so far as its spirit is concerned, was subsequently executed by the successor of Augustus, Constantine, who made Byzantium his capital. The other ode-obviously modelled on the first Pythian of Pindar-beginning, 'Descende Cœlo,' is a panegyric upon Augustus, whom Horace represents, under the image of Jupiter, as victorious over his adversaries, represented under the image of the rebellious Titans.

The fact is—and the instances just selected are so far important as they serve to indicate one of the chief of his intellectual characteristics-Macaulay could do nothing in moderation; he was always in extremes. If an unfortunate pedant made a grammatical slip, he was, according to Macaulay's verdict, a blockhead. whose correction it was hopeless to attempt. Herein lies his essential defect as an historian. In his judgment, men are all black or all white. He applies the logical doctrine of the excluded middle to the domain of ethics. The characters whom he draws deserve immortal glory or eternal infamy. He has thus no idea of that blending and commingling of good and bad in the same individual which is the necessary, though contradictory, essence of all human beings; for mortal goodness or badness is determined, not by the absolute and exclusive presence of the attributes of the former or the latter, but by the preponderance of the one principle or the other. If Macaulay's account of the several periods which he describes were true, no honest man could have been a Royalist in the reign of Charles, and no patriot could have been a Tory in the time of William III.

This violent opposition of principles, feelings, and characters is to be observed in his literary style as well as in his political opinions. His style is above all things epigrammatic, but the force of his epigrams consists chiefly in the violence of his contrasts. He is exceedingly fond of illustrating one set of facts by showing their opposition to another. So, too, with men. He likes to pit the most widely different individuals against each other. For instance, speaking of the House of Commons as a most difficult and inexplicable audience to please, he asks, 'What are you to think of an assembly where Peel is always accepted and Mackintosh is not listened to? where even Burke and Erskine were regarded as dinner-bells?' Now, what on more minute examination does this, which appears at first sight so smart and telling, prove really to mean? What is the estimate thus epigrammatically recorded worth? Mackintosh was, of course, a man of great ability and acquirements, but he was pre-eminent in nothing, and Lord Dalling, in his 'Portraits of Eminent Men,' has very justly styled him 'the Disappointing Man.' A Scotch medico, with a good deal of legal, literary, and metaphysical knowledge, and a good deal of Scotch brogue, has not in him the elements of Parliamentary success. But no man was ever more perfectly fitted for the command of the House of Commons than Peel. With a knowledge of finance which was unsurpassed; with a power of debate which everyone was compelled to respect; with a courageous spirit which enabled him to discard the errors of his party when he found they were errors; a minister whose government fixed for ever the commercial policy of England on the broad, just, and immovable basis of free-trade—such a statesman had a paramount and indefeasible claim to the consideration of the House of Commons. That Erskine failed in the House of Commons is true, as it is true of very many other lawyers. At the bar he was pre-eminent and incomparable, but a jury is an audience very different from the House of Commons; and a man may be admirable with the one who cannot obtain a hearing from the other. That Burke failed in the House of Commons is not true, though there can be no doubt that he was often injudicious, and endeavoured to address the House when it was in no humour to listen to his sage and profound sentiments. He was, as Goldsmith put it, one who,

> Too deep for his hearers, still went on refining, And thought of convincing while they thought of dining.

Yet, how has this occasional neglect at the hands of his contemporaries been avenged by posterity! While of Chatham's oratory, of his son's, and of Fox's, only a few fragments are extant, we have

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lengthy and entire orations of Burke, models of eloquence and statesmanlike wisdom, embodying and emblazoning in the most gorgeous colours of language and imagination the grandest principles of liberty and civilisation.

It has been said, perhaps somewhat disingenuously and unjustifiably, that the recollection of the encounters which he had with Peel in the House of Commons, and in which he seldom came off conspicuously triumphant, induced Macaulay to disparage the capacities of the statesman whom Mr. Disraeli has described as the 'greatest member of Parliament that ever lived.' We read in the 'Greville Memoirs,' under date September 24, 1831, 'Peel closed the debate on Thursday night with a very fine speech, the best (one of his opponents told me, and it is of no use asking the opinion of friends if a candid opponent is to be found) he had ever made, not only on that subject, but on any other; he cut Macaulay to ribands. Macaulay,' continues Greville, 'is very brilliant, but his speeches are harangues, and never replies. Whereas Peel's long experience and real talent for debate give him a great advantage in the power of reply, which he very eminently Macaulay, however, will probably be a very distinguished man.' Macaulay's speeches on the Reform Bill are perfect specimens of eloquence and impassioned utterance, rich with knowledge, tremulous with fire and imagination. His Parliamentary reputation and authority were great, and when he was Secretary for War in Lord John Russell's government he touched a high level of debating excellence. But at no time did he owe anything to the outward graces of the orator. The little action that he used is described by a constant habitué of the House as ungainly; the voice as full and loud, but without the modulation found in practised speakers; his speeches as carefully prepared, and repeated without the loss or omission of a single word. 'This last observation,' says Mr. Trevelyan, 'deserves a few sentences of comment. Macaulay spoke frequently enough on the spur of the moment, and some excellent judges were of opinion that on these occasions his style gained more in animation than it lost in Even when he was in his place to take part in a discussion which had long been foreseen, he had no notes in his hand and no manuscript in his pocket. If a debate was in prospect, he would turn the subject over while he paced his chamber or tramped along the streets. Each thought as it rose in his mind embodied itself in phrases and clothed itself in an appropriate drapery of images, instances, and quotations; and when, in the course of his speech, the thought recurred, all the words which gave it point and beauty spontaneously recurred with it.'

Mr. Trevelyan very happily speaks of the career of his illustrious uncle as his 'joyous and shining pilgrimage through life.' The history of literature and politics contains no instance of an author or statesman who appreciated existence more thoroughly, or who imparted more of his own delight in existence to those whom he really loved. Whether he was with his sister, or with his young nieces or nephews; in the solitude of his study, with the books which he incessantly devoured, or with the foolscap sheets before him that he filled not very rapidly with his awkward and unprepossessing manuscript; or in those brilliant social circles in which he moved—and, whatever Macaulay may have affected, or Mr. Trevelyan may say, the Whig historian of William III. was one of the greatest diners-out of his epoch; or in India, where he found in literary study what others found in physical relaxation; he was always happy, he never grumbled, he dwelt exclusively upon the sweets of past triumphs, or drew in radiant hues the horoscope of victories yet to come. His chatty breakfasts in the Albany or at Holly Lodge, his snug dinner-parties, were all of them the occasion of bliss as supreme in its way as the consciousness that he had made an effective speech at Westminster, or had completed a new volume of his History. His physical and intellectual constitution were ever in a state of admirable equilibrium. His genius gave him prosperity, and his prosperity was ecstasy. The satisfaction which he experienced in economising each odd moment was intense, and whether the afternoon was given to Holland House, or to strolling through the irregular little streets sacred to booksellers which abound in the neighbourhood of the Strand, he was equally well pleased. Thus it is that the history of Macaulay's life is not only that of a man who reaped the highest laurels of literature, and nearly the highest laurels of politics, who dignified and ennobled the profession of authorship, who has taken his place as a master of prose and as a founder of a school of prose writers, who has contributed more than any man who ever lived to the general and the higher culture of the English middle classes; but that it is also the history of a man who, turning to the utmost account the rare talents with which he was endowed, gained from them healthy employment, a delight that was its own reward, and a zest of being which ensured without delay its own fruition.

T. H. S. ESCOTT,

#### Joshua Paggard's Daughter.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.'

#### CHAPTER XIII.

'I LEAN UPON THEE, DEAR, WITHOUT ALARM.'

NAOMI awoke with a strange feeling of trouble on the morning after her father's return with his young wife. She felt like one who, after some sudden bereavement, awakens to the old familiar world to find it desolate and empty.

'I have lost my father,' came like a cry of despair from her troubled heart; and then came Reason, the calm and quiet teacher, and sat down by her bed, and argued the matter to its logical issue, and showed her that her father had done her no wrong. She blushed at the thought of her own selfishness—she to grudge her father this new happiness—she who had given so much of her heart to another—she who was so soon to abandon the home-nest.

'But my father has always been first, my father will always be

first, in my heart,' she said to herself excusingly.

'Let her only make my father happy, and I shall be satisfied,' she thought, as she stood before the little looking-glass, twisting the heavy coil of hair round her neat tortoise-shell comb. 'I wish she were only a little older. She has such a childish look. I cannot fancy her a companion for my father.'

Naomi went downstairs with a determination to be very kind to the poor little wife—to shield her, if need were, from Aunt Judith's acrimony; but on this first morning Aunt Judith was scrupulously civil; if she erred at all it was on the side of overpoliteness. She was inclined to be righteous over-much in her dealings with the new member of the household.

Jim greeted his stepmother with frank familiarity, and offered to take her for a nutting expedition in the woods after dinner.

'Of course you're fond of nuts?' he said.

'I'm very fond of the woods,' answered Cynthia, whose heart overflowed with kindly feeling for these stepchildren, and who was grateful for the smallest token of regard on their part.

'I should like to know how the business is to go on if you're

out nutting every afternoon,' said Judith, turning sharply on her nephew. She was not going to waste civility on him.

- 'Come, now, I've been sticking pretty close to the shop for the last six months. I don't often play truant, I'm sure, and there's not much doing in my line between dinner and tea.'
  - ' Of course, if Mrs. Haggard wishes you to go out walking-'
- 'Call me Cynthia, please,' cried the girl, and then added timidly, unless you would like to call me sister.'
- 'You're very kind, but I couldn't turn my tongue to it. I never had a sister, and I can't bring myself to make believe. As to calling you by your Christian name, I should feel myself wanting in respect to my brother's wife; and nobody shall ever have cause to lay that at my door.'
- 'I shall call you Cynthia, though,' said Jim. 'It would never do for a great hobbledehoy like me to be calling a pretty little thing like you mother. Folks would split their sides with laughing. And you'll come nutting this afternoon? There's hazel and cobnuts, and no end, in Matcherly Wood. It's three miles from here; but you can walk that much, I daresay.'
- 'I am a pretty good walker,' answered Cynthia, delighted to be on such good terms with her stepson.
- 'Shall I wash the tea-things?' she asked, when breakfast was over and Joshua had gone out.
- 'I've washed 'em for the last four-and-twenty years, and I shouldn't like harm to come to them,' answered Judith politely; 'you needn't trouble about it, Mrs. Haggard. All you've got to do is to amuse yourself; you're the mistress here, and it's your place to be waited on.'
- 'But, indeed, Miss Haggard, I have never been accustomed—'protested Cynthia.
- 'What you may have been accustomed to has nothing to do with it,' replied Judith. 'You are my brother's wife, and you shall be treated as such. There's the best parlour, when you like to sit by yourself. We haven't used it on work-a-days; but, of course, that's no reason why you shouldn't.'
- 'I had rather sit in the room you use,' said Cynthia, oppressed by so much courtesy; 'I should be very sorry to cause any trouble or alteration in your life.'

Naomi was somewhat restless in her goings in and out, and up and downstairs, between breakfast and dinner, on this particular morning, having an idea that, as Oswald had not paid her his accustomed visit yesterday, he was likely to come early to-day; and she was anxious to be the first to tell him of the startling change that had taken place in the household, to soften the edge

of his resentment should he be inclined to resent this act of her father's. She had not quite realised the fact that no one had any right to question Joshua's disposal of his own life.

There were the usual morning tasks: a batch of starched curtains to be ironed on the board in front of the kitchen window—the best parlour to be dusted and beeswaxed—flowers to be trimmed and watered. But throughout her performance of these duties Naomi was listening or watching for Oswald's coming. Dinner-time came, however, and no Oswald.

Joshua went out directly after dinner, and Judith retired to her stronghold behind the counter. Cynthia and Jim started for their walk to Matcherly Wood, and Naomi was standing at the parlour window, in her afternoon dress, in that quiet hour of the declining day when the sky takes a golden tinge above distant woods. She had been watching some time, when she saw her lover coming round the bend of the road, walking slowly till he caught sight of her, and then quickening his pace, and approaching her with a smile. She went out to the garden gate to meet him, and they went to the garden together, instead of going into the dull old house. They greeted each other with the tranquil affection of lovers whose future happiness is secure, whose present bliss is undisturbed by outward influences or inward doubts.

- 'Why didn't you come yesterday evening, Oswald?'
- 'Because my father took it into his head to be unusually conversational, and I did not like to leave him without a listener. I thought I could make amends for last night's self-denial by coming to tempt you out for a morning ramble in the woods; but this morning the Squire discovered that he was not well enough to keep an appointment with his tenant at Chale, and sent me off to represent him; so after a ten-mile ride upon Herne I had to walk about a farm all the morning, hearing complaints and excuses, and inspecting improvements of whose nature or advantage I had only the vaguest idea, yet about which I knew I should have to stand a rasping cross-examination on my return.'
  - ' Poor Oswald!'
- 'I'm afraid I never was made to grow rich out of the soil, Naomi. And did you really miss me, dearest? That would be a wonderful admission from you. You don't often gratify my self-esteem by letting me think myself necessary to your happiness.'
- 'Oswald!' she said, with a tender reproachfulness in the serious eyes, which meant much more than words.
- 'You would have me believe that love's best language is silence,' he answered, playfully; 'but I sometimes wish you were just a little more given to sweet words.'

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- 'There are some feelings that are too sacred to be spoken of lightly. If it should please Heaven to put my affection to the test, you would not find it wanting.'
- 'I believe that, dear. I have a measureless faith in your truth and constancy, only I am exacting enough to sigh for a little more warmth as well. There are moments in which I have asked myself, Is this love, or only a sublimated friendship? We have schooled ourselves to such perfect tranquillity. We have so stifled all the agitations and emotions which poets depict as love's necessary adjuncts—nay, love's very atmosphere—that I have found myself asking, Is it really love? or is it some calmer, softer, holier feeling, such as the saints of old felt for each other; a sentiment which might be breathed through a convent grating, or communicated by martyr to martyr in a pitying sigh on the pathway to the stake?'
- 'I don't know whether my love is like the love your poets write about, Oswald—that Court poet, for instance, who was in love with Amoret and Sacharissa at the same time—but I know that if my life were weighed against it, love would conquer life.'
- 'My dearest,' cried Oswald, tenderly, drawing her to him, 'I will never say these foolish things again. Yours is the true love. Yours are the depth and steadfastness, and I am a shallow wretch who cannot properly understand any feeling that does not gush forth in a torrent of words. Darling, I will trust you, and believe implicitly in the love that is not loud.'

They had come to the end of the garden, and to that green oasis of grass plot, where there were a bench and table under the shade of trees whose leaves were now fast falling, or hanging limp and yellow on the dark brown branches. It was one of those still autumnal afternoons on which the earth seems to rest in a dreamy silence, as if wearied by summer's long pageant. Her corn is garnered, her fruits are stored, she has done her work, this faithful Mother Earth, and she folds her hands in the soft September atmosphere and composes herself for winter's long sleep.

- 'My Naomi, how grave you are,' said Oswald when they had strolled to the wilderness without a word on either side.
- 'I have something to tell you, Oswald,' she answered, looking at him anxiously.
  - 'Nothing bad, I hope. No postponement of our marriage?'
- 'No. It is something about my father, something that will surprise you very much—perhaps shock you—'

Oswald was puzzled. He had been taught to consider Joshua Haggard a rich man—a man who made money fast and spent it

slowly; but Naomi's words and manner suggested trouble of some kind, and he could only imagine financial difficulty.

'You mean that your father's business is not so profitable as

we believe,' he said; 'he has some apprehension of failure?'

'It is nothing about business. My father is married again, Oswald. He brought his wife home to us yesterday evening.'

· Oswald gave a long sigh of astonishment.

- 'That is a surprise! But as long as it does not make you unhappy, darling, and I don't see why it should, as you'll soon be out of a stepmother's power, it can't make any difference to me. Who is the lady? Is she very grim and awful?'
  - 'She is very pretty, and younger than I.'

'You don't mean it?'

- 'I hope you won't despise my father, Oswald?' said Naomi, deprecatingly.
- 'Despise him for marrying a pretty young woman instead of an ugly old one! No, my dear, I am not so inhuman. The fact is sudden enough to be startling, but it is not unnatural. And a pretty girl will hardly be a gorgon as a stepmother. You are not very much afraid of her, are you, Naomi?'

'Poor child! I think she is more inclined to be afraid of me. It is such a relief to have told you, Oswald. You will not think

any the worse of my father, will you, dear?'

- 'Think worse of him for being human enough to fall in love. No, Naomi, I am too deeply entangled in the meshes myself not to have a fellow-feeling for another prisoner in the net. And for a man of your father's age, love is a very serious business. Cupid has a stronger grip upon sober manhood than on shallow and frivolous youth. Tell me all about it, dear. Who is the lady? Young, you say, and pretty? Do I know her? Have I ever seen her? Is she one of your Bethelites?'
- 'No, Oswald; she's quite a stranger. She was never at Combhollow till yesterday evening.'

'And do you know nothing about her?'

Naomi was silent. Here was a divided duty. Oswald, as her future husband, had a right to possess her confidence; yet loyalty to her father demanded that she should keep the secret of his wife's lowly origin; and she had some sense of personal shame in the idea that her father's wife had been one little year ago a houseless wanderer upon the country side without name or friends—a waif, whose only history was of starvation and ill-usage.

'Is she vulgar, or disagreeable in any way?' asked Oswald, taking Naomi's silence as an evidence of embarrassment, and pic-

turing to himself some miller's blowzy-cheeked daughter, or worse, perhaps, the vivacious barmaid to some roadside inn.

'No; she is gentle and quiet. I do not think you will dislike her. I only feared that you might think my father foolish for having chosen such a young wife.'

The church-clock struck five, the inevitable tea-time: and Naomi turned to leave the wilderness, where the patriarchal ferns were already brown and yellow, while younger varieties still retained their tender green.

They went back to the house by the long straight pathway between the borders of rose bushes and old-fashioned autumn flowers, which bounded the neat expanse of vegetables, in carefully kept rows, the celery-bed which already breathed forth its aromatic odour, the dark leaves of beet-root, and straggling winter kail. Oswald felt a mild curiosity about the preacher's new wife. He was slightly amused at this revelation of human weakness in the reserved and dignified Joshua, a man who had seemed to occupy a higher stage of life than that on which human weaknesses have sway. He followed Naomi into the house; and stood close behind her as she opened the parlour-door, and, looking over her shoulder, saw Joshua's wife.

Cynthia was kneeling by the newly lighted fire, with her straw bonnet hanging over her arm, just as she had come in from the nutting expedition; her loosened hair falling a little over her face, her cheeks flushed to a delicate carnation by air and exercise, her eyes looking dreamily at the bright flames leaping up from the newly kindled wood—a pretty picture, assuredly, concentrating all the light in the dusky room. The tea-things were laid, but the family had not yet assembled. Cynthia was alone.

She started up as Naomi entered with her lover, and stood before them shyly, too much abashed by a stranger's presence for speech.

'I hope you enjoyed your ramble?' said Naomi kindly.

'The wood was lovely. It was very kind of your brother to take me there.'

'I think it was kind of you to go with him. This is Mr. Pentreath; I—I have told him about my father's marriage.'

Cynthia courtesied, and Oswald held out his hand, at which she gave him hers shyly, never having shaken hands with any one so different from the young men of Penmoyle, whose hands were always red and inclined to coarseness, and who breathed hard in society. She was not awed or impressed by Oswald's appearance as she had been by Joshua Haggard's dark and earnest face, but she considered him highly ornamental. Oswald was surprised by

this delicate and flower-like beauty. He had expected to see a pretty young woman, buxom and good-tempered, with rosy cheeks adorned by large bunches of curls, not innocent of bergamot-scented pomatum, coral earrings, perhaps, and one of those velvet head-bands which he so heartly detested: the kind of young woman he had seen in a tobacconist's shop at Exeter.

He looked at Cynthia silently, lost in wonder. Where could Joshua Haggard have discovered this gracious creature? It was as if he had come unawares into that homely parlour and found Milton's Sabrina or Ovid's Daphne standing by the hearth.

Mr. Haggard came in presently, followed by his sister. He gave his wife a little look of greeting which was full of quiet tenderness, and then welcomed his future son-in-law with a hearty shake-hands.

'You see I have stolen a march upon you all, Oswald,' he said.
'At my age a man does not care to make a fuss about getting married; and I knew that Naomi and you would give my wife an affectionate welcome. I had no occasion to stipulate for that beforehand.'

Cynthia had slipped away to carry her bonnet upstairs. She had been too well trained by the Miss Weblings not to know that a bonnet flung carelessly on a chair in the family sitting-room would be an offence to Aunt Judith. She came back breathless, with her hair neatly arranged, and took her seat by her husband's side, but not before Miss Haggard had exclaimed:

'Whenever are we going to sit down to tea, I wonder? It's a quarter-past already. I don't know what's come to the house.'

#### CHAPTER XIV.

'TROP BELLE POUR MOI, VOILÀ MON TRÉPAS.'

The actual machinery of life, the common details of domestic existence, underwent little change after Joshua Haggard's second marriage, and the introduction of a fair girl-wife into the sober household. The change was in the minds of the household, not in outward things. Aunt Judith abated no jot or tittle of her authority. Her assumption of her accustomed post at the tea-table upon the evening of Cynthia's arrival was symbolical of her maintenance of supreme authority in all domestic matters. She did not even offer to surrender the keys of those awful and impenetrable repositories in which she kept the jams and jellies, the pickles and home-made wines, and all those items which, in Jim's opinion, gave savour and relish to life—the ornamental margin of existence's daily needs, like the labyrinthine scroll-work and illumination which

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border the texts of a mediæval Bible. She retained supreme authority in the kitchen; and this young wife's coming did not benefit her step-son by so much as an extra pudding on week-days, or a currant cake flavoured with saffron, and of that golden hue his soul loved, on Sundays.

Before Cynthia had been established in her new home for the space of a week she had discovered that her domestic duties and rights were alike usurped by another, that in yielding the tea-pot she had given up her place in her husband's home. This was a disappointment; for in her happy dreams of life with Joshua she had seen herself ministering to him, providing for his comforts, working with those busy clever hands of hers for his small needs and simple luxuries, lending new graces and pleasures to his daily life, were they but the smallest things, such as a bunch of fresh flowers on his breakfast-table, or a dish of light cakes at tea-time. She had a natural taste for and love of household work—a handiness in all womanly offices which had won her the approval of her mistresses at Penmoyle; and to be shut out of these offices was a hardship she felt keenly.

Not one word of complaint was ever spoken by her, or Joshua would have promptly transferred the domestic sceptre. She was by nature submissive, and the experience of her brief life had made obedience a habit. She bowed her neck to Judith's yoke, and resigned her simple household privileges without a murmur. Joshua thought it right, no doubt, or he would not look on approvingly. She did not know that Joshua—whose temporal and spiritual duties filled his time and thoughts to overflowing—had never thought about the matter at all. She remembered what he had said on that first evening—'Let there be peace in the household, and no foolish fuss about trifles;' and she accepted this speech as a command. Any opposition to Aunt Judith would be rebellion against her husband.

Cynthia's position in the family, therefore, seemed rather that of daughter than wife. She sat by her husband's side at meals; she spent her mornings in needlework, and her afternoons in serious reading, or occasionally in a ramble on the sea-shore or in the woods with Jim. She would have been better pleased to accompany her husband on his pastoral visits to distant homesteads and cottages, but Joshua told her gently that her presence would be out of place on such occasions. She taught in Mr. Haggard's Sunday-school, held in a roomy loft at the top of the chapel. She often went to read to the sick and aged among her husband's flock, delighted to be of some use in this manner; but these occupations left a wide margin of her life to be filled somehow; and

there were afternoon hours in which she sat with the Bible or Baxter open before her, and her thoughts wandering far from the text.

There were some sad thoughts mingled with her full contentment in an union which had seemed to her royal and triumphant as Esther's bridal with Ahasuerus. She had been quick to perceive the consternation her appearance had occasioned on that first evening; and she was conscious that beneath Judith's cold civility and somewhat exaggerated politeness there lurked a disapproving spirit that was not to be conciliated. Let her be never so assiduous to please her husband's sister, Judith would never love her; and, more than this, Judith had contrived to let her know, without any apparent unkindness of intention, that Joshua's marriage had lowered him in the esteem of his flock

- 'We can't all be apostles and martyrs,' said Judith; 'but folks expected a great deal of my brother. "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord," and he that's married doesn't. St. Paul says that pretty plain, you see; there's no getting away from the right meaning of his words. And people will naturally cast that up at my brother—marrying a second time, and a girl younger than his daughter. I don't blame you, my dear. I daresay if you'd thought of these things you'd have said no, especially as your own inclination would have led you to prefer a younger man.'
- 'I could never have loved or honoured any one as I love and honour my husband,' protested Cynthia, flushing with anger at the suggestion.
- 'Ah,' sighed Judith, with a world of significance, 'of course it was a great thing for you to come to such a home as this, and a husband as comfortably off as my brother. It isn't many young women in service that get as well provided for.'
  - 'I hope you don't think-' cried Cynthia eagerly.
- 'I trust I'm too much of a Christian to think evil of any one,' replied Aunt Judith with dignity. 'I'm thinking what other people will say. You can't stop their tongues. If they choose to say that my brother Joshua was led away from his own principles and the first of Corinthians by a pretty face, and that you married him for the sake of a home, there's no law in the land to hinder 'em from having their say.'

Thus for the first time in her life Cynthia heard of that invisible and irresponsible tribunal which is always sitting outside our doors; and was taught to feel that it was not to her Creator and her own conscience alone she had to answer, but that she ought also to shape her acts to meet the views of other people; other people

would measure her acts by their standard, sound the depths of her heart with their plummet; and unheard, undefended, ignorant alike of her indictment and her sentence, she would be convicted and condemned.

This was a chilling revelation to one as innocent of life's complexities as Miranda or Perdita. One of the few lessons in the world's bitter school which Cynthia had thoroughly learned was to endure undeserved affliction patiently. She bore Aunt Judith's sharp stings and quiet stabs as meekly as she had borne ill-usage from the tyrants of her childhood. But she felt her punishment none the less keenly; and already, ere she had been married a month, began to ask herself if Joshua had verily done wisely in marrying her, and whether it would not have been better for her to have gone on worshipping him at a distance all her life, spending her tranquil industrious days in the little kitchen at Penmoyle, doing her duty, and being praised for faithful service, among people who were in no wise scandalised by her existence. It had been a very monotonous life, containing little for memory to dwell on. offering still less for hope to build upon; and the river of life. which youth would fain sail upon, is a bright and swiftly flowing current—not a tideless canal. But it had been a life full of peace. and already in this new life there had come a feeling which was not peace. Unhappily, Judith's christianlike and candid remarks upon popular feeling at Combhollow were sustained by a foundation of truth. The minister's congregation did not contemplate his second marriage with entire approval. They were not prepared to take his youthful flaxen-haired wife to their hearths and bosoms with any warmth of affection. She would be invited out to tea, of course, and best tea-pots would be taken out of their chamois-leather enfoldings, and amber-hued cakes would be baked for her regalement; but there would be little heartiness in her reception-it would be ceremonial and civic only, like the welcome of a foreign princess when the nation feels their prince has made a foolish or insignificant choice.

There were so many things to be said against this marriage of Joshua Haggard's. In the first place, why marry at all? In the second, if he must needs marry, why not choose one of his own flock—a comfortable widow, for instance—and there were several comfortable widows among the Bethelites—whose antecedents would be patent to everybody at Combhollow, whose life from the cradle upwards would be as well-known to the community as the pattern of her parlour carpet, or the furniture in her best bedroom? Such a marriage, though unspiritual, and, in somewise, depoetising the ideal pastor, would at least have recommended itself to the

more practical members of the congregation as prudent and suitable.

Whatever disappointment such a marriage might have caused in those loftier minds which had elevated the preacher and teacher into the Saint and Apostle—minds to be found chiefly among the spinsters of Joshua's flock—it could hardly have occasioned scandal; but this unannounced, unexplained union with an unknown young woman from the far West of Cornwall—a girl who had worked in the mines, perhaps, and worn unholy attire, and toiled shoulder-to-shoulder with rough barbarians, speaking a strange tongue—this was enough to inspire unpleasant doubts in the minds of Joshua's congregation, to call all their prejudices to arms against the fair intruder.

Who was she-supposing that she had not worked in the mines? Who was she? whence came she? to whom belonged she?-questions to which no one could supply any categorical or satisfactory answer, though speculative answers and suggestions were to be had in abundance. Whence came this wandering rumour, traceable to no particular source, yet in everybody's mouth, that Joshua had found his young wife by the wayside, a beggar, with bare feet, nouseless, friendless, not even knowing the name of her kindred, or the place of her birth, nor on what parish she might fasten her helplessness; the merest waif upon the stream of life? notion could hardly have arisen from any imprudent communicativeness upon the part of Aunt Judith, for, when sounded by solicitous friends upon the subject of her brother's marriage, that lady had refrained from all expression of opinion save such dumb, inscrutable movements as shoulder-shrugs, elevation of the eyebrows, lips tightly drawn, and head shaken with a solemn significance. Whatever this dumb-show meant, Combhollow felt assured that it meant a great deal, and meant no good.

There was a general and growing conviction that Joshua had acted foolishly, if not wickedly, in marrying this strange young woman. 'How are the mighty fallen!' cried the Bethelites; and in their lamentations over the degradation of their pastor, they indulged in a great deal of Scriptural language to his disadvantage. Perhaps the value of our Bible never comes so fully home to us as when we quote it against our erring neighbour. It was felt that Joshua held the same position in Combhollow that David must have occupied in Jerusalem after that lamentable episode in the princely life which brought greatness to the level of the sinful herd. The preacher read disapproval in the faces of his flock on the first Sabbath after his marriage; he discovered a coldness, an alteration in the tone of those customers at the shop who were of his congre-

gation. His Church of England patrons, on the contrary, congratulated him heartily upon his marriage, and praised his wife's pretty face in the friendliest manner. But they had never canonised the pastor; they contemplated him solely in his aspect as a general dealer; and what more natural, what more distinctly human, than that a well-to-do grocer should beautify the autumn of his life with the charms and graces of a young wife?

Joshua saw the change in his flock, and his heart rebelled against their hardness. Pride sustained him-a manly and honest pride, and a spiritual pride, which told him that he was better than the best of those who presumed to sit in judgment upon him. among them had toiled for the good cause as he had done? Who, among these professing Methodists, had trodden in the footsteps of the great founder of Methodism as he had trodden, faithfully imitating that pious man's asceticism and self-denial? And were these people, whom he had served so faithfully, for whose spiritual welfare he had laboured so hard, to turn the light that he had kindled against him, to distort the law he had taught them, in order to pass an iniquitous sentence upon their teacher? He felt these cold looks and altered greetings keenly as a deep injustice, and shut himself up in the armour of offended pride. God had given him this infinite blessing—the love of a pure and lovely woman—and was man's malice to poison his cup of bliss? No, he told himself. live without the world's regard. He had never served mankind for their own sake, and he could dispense with their affection. prayers and sermons at this time of estrangement he raised himself so far above the level of daily life and earthly ills, that there was no taint of personal feeling to be perceived in any of his words, no murmur against man's injustice crept into his communion with Never had his teaching been clearer or more elevated; never were his prayers more fervent. Into that spiritual world of which he possessed the key neither worldly malice nor worldly misconception could follow him.

Again, at the worst, were his flock never so ungrateful, he knew of one listener whose mute enthusiasm was in itself sufficient for inspiration. If he had not been able, of his own unassisted strength, to lift up his soul to the very gates of heaven, that look of Cynthia's, as she sat in the narrow little pew just under the square box of a pulpit, would have been the source of pure imaginings and holy thoughts. His Sabbaths were now such blessed days; for all the time he did not owe to duty he gave to his young wife. They walked together by that lovely sea which in its jewel-like colouring so often recalled the Oriental imagery of Holy Writ. They talked together of spiritual things, with a fond familiarity which is natural

to those whose only poetry, whose only knowledge of the beautiful, has been drawn from Scripture. Cynthia's greatest delight at this time was to hear her husband talk of his youthful career, his discouragements and successes, his alternate despair and triumph; those hysterical gusts of enthusiasm in the newly-converted which had promised so much, those chilling disappointments caused by backsliding in his brightest disciples, the sudden going out of the sacred fire.

Perfectly blessed in such perfect love, Joshua was able to live his own life with supreme indifference as to the opinion of the outside world; and this independence of feeling speedily revealing itself to the flock, there was a general sense of disappointment at the discovery that Mr. Haggard had not been crushed by their disapproval, and then the cold looks began to give place to friendly smiles and salutations, as of old. The pastor was complimented on his last sermon; the more select of the community were pressing in their invitations to tea-parties of a ceremonious character.

Joshua, who had felt his affections outraged, was not so easily to be won back to the pleasant path of brotherly love. He rejected all invitations to tea, responded coldly to the warmest salutations, and heard men's praises of his eloquence unmoved. But in all pastoral duties he was faithful, as of old; ministered to the sick, taught in his school, gave three evenings a week to a class of young men belonging to the labouring community, who met in the loft over the chapel for serious reading and conversation by the light of two dip candles, and joined in a hymn before they separated. It may be supposed, therefore, that, with the exception of those tranquil Sabbath hours between the services, there was not much time left for him to devote to his young wife, and that Cynthia had plenty of leisure in which to meditate upon things spiritual and temporal.

#### CHAPTER XV.

#### A FAMILY PICTURE.

The year drew to its close, and society at Combhollow, which possessed something of that capacity for adapting itself to circumstances which is characteristic of society in wider circles, had got accustomed to the idea of Joshua Haggard's marriage; and, if not altogether reconciled to his union, had become, at any rate, resigned to the inevitable.

'It's a blessed mercy for Mr. Haggard that he's got a sister to look after his house and keep the furniture polished, and see that the bottoms of the loaves and broken pieces don't get thrown to the fowls,' remarked careful housewives to each other in the friendly loquacity of the tea-table, 'or else things would go to wrack and ruin altogether, I should think, with a young wife like that.'

'And so pretty, too,' sighed a matron, gently shaking the stiffest of caps, as if prettiness were a crime.

'Pretty and useless, no doubt, poor thing. And he seems so foolishly fond of her. I'm sure to see them out walking together you'd think they were sweethearts that had only just begun to keep company,' remarked Mrs. Pycroft, of the First and Last, whose conversations with her husband after marriage had been chiefly of a didactic or argumentative character.

Once, and once only, had Joshua—whose style of preaching was more personal and familiar than that which obtained at this time in the Established Church, where the chaff of abstruse doctrine was but sparsely qualified with the grain of moral teaching and Gospel truth—approached indirectly the subject of his marriage.

He had been quoting Richard Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, and, suddenly diverging from the theology of the preacher, enlarged upon the man and his life.

'It was in many ways a life of trial, yet in all ways a life full of blessing,' he said; 'nor do I count it the smallest of graces which Providence bestowed upon this great and good man that, at forty-seven years of age, he was blessed in the affection of a wife of three-and-twenty. He had come to that time of life without having ever known the sweetness of domestic happiness. But it pleased God that he should be the instrument of this dear girl's conversion, and that her heart should go forth to him who had brought her the message of salvation. There were some, perchance, in those evil days who were scandalised by this marriage; for it had been a part of Baxter's creed that for ministers to marry was barely lawful. But Heaven smiled upon this wedded pair, who were verily married in the Lord; and Baxter has told us that he found in his wife a helpmeet, a comforter in all his sorrows, the sharer of his prison, and always the helper to his joy.'

Before the year was ended Naomi had become completely reconciled to her father's marriage. She had suffered faint thrills of pain just at first, when she saw Cynthia draw her chair near Joshua's, and perhaps sit with her hand in his, while he read the evening Scriptures. She had felt it just a little hard to see her father's eyes rest with such ineffable love upon the face of the stranger; but she had schooled her heart to submit to this loss—if loss it could be called—since her father was more affectionate to his children than he had been before his marriage. She had subdued all human jealousy, and had taught herself to be glad that her father had won so fair and faithful a companion. There was

something indescribably touching in the young wife's childlike affection for her husband, her intense belief in him, her unbounded admiration for his talents and powers as preacher and teacher, her implicit faith in his judgment. If flattery be a pleasant poison, Joshua was in a fair way to be poisoned by the sweetest of all flatteries—the exaggerated estimate which springs from womanly love. Love with a woman of this temper is but another name for worship; and Cynthia's love had begun in a spiritual idolatry which had set Joshua but a little way below the saints and apostles he had taught her to reverence. In a man so truthful as Joshua. closer communion revealed no flaw, familiarity was not followed by After two months of married life the husband still occupied the pedestal upon which Cynthia had elevated the teacher; but, although she had suffered no disappointment in the man himself, her vivid and romantic mind began to find something wanting in his surroundings. The atmosphere of her daily life was depressing; the young eager spirit yearned for work of some kind, and was flung back upon the dull blank of idleness. sighed for keener air, a wider horizon, yet scarcely knew what she desired. She had secret aspirations for her husband, and rebelled against that common-place trade which occupied one half of his life—that buying and selling and getting gain, which seemed to her enthusiastic mind a practical denial of the Gospel which the trader preached on Sundays, the lesson which he taught his flock on weekdays. These divided duties, this solicitous service to a worldly master, struck her as out of joint with her husband's sacred character. To her, who had known no other church than this Dissenting community, and who hardly knew that they were Dissenters. Joshua was as holy as if Episcopal hands had been laid upon him. and she was troubled by the incongruity between the trader and the Yet, seeing that Joshua saw no harm in his calling, that he held honest trade as an honourable office, she dared not lift up her voice in remonstrance, and accepted the shop as one of those things which, like Aunt Judith, were an inevitable element in her life.

Christmas brought cheerful thoughts and friendly relations between the minister and his flock. Presents rained upon Joshua at this season, and those stiffnecked members of his congregation who had lifted the nose at his marriage, atoned for their unfriendly feeling by the fattest of turkeys and youngest of geese. Noël was a season of much eating and drinking at Combhollow; and even Methodism forgot to be ascetic, and gorged itself with beef and pudding, with a riotous delight in the good things of this mortal life that would have made William Law's hair stand

on end. The Established Church woke up from its comfortable doze, and sang carols on Christmas Eve; the ecclesiastical feeling for colour displayed itself in sprigs of holly, stuck here and there in convenient places by the hands of beadle and pewopener; and a dole of bread, provided by the bequest of the virtuous dame Margery Hawker, of this parish, was meted out to five-andtwenty poor women on Christmas morning. New bonnets, modelled upon the coal-scuttle of the period, were to be seen above the high oaken pews of St. Mary Magdalene, and enlivened the crowded congregation at Little Bethel. It was altogether a season of pleasant thoughts and general contentment, a season which seemed very sweet to Naomi, as she walked in the leafless woods with the lover who was so soon to be her husband. Early in March, before the birds had pecked the crocuses to death, before the daffodils had begun their fairy dances in the windy afternoons, Naomi and Oswald were to be married at the grey old parish church. It was a wonderful thing to think of. Naomi was to be a great lady, and live at the Grange, and have that pretty morningroom, with its dainty book-cases, and neat duodecimo edition of the old poets, bound in white vellum, for her very own. She was to belong to the old Squire and his son; the gardens and the park. where the cattle browsed, and the beautiful mysterious wood, with its glades and dells and lopsided old trees, and knolls and thickets, which one could never quite know by heart, were to be hers-a part of her life, inseparable from all her future years.

'You will let me go to chapel, Oswald?' she asked, earnestly; 'you will never try to keep me away from Little Bethel?'

'My dearest, I would rather go there with you than hinder your going. You shall be free, my dear. These things are more to you than they are to me. It would be hard if I were to oppose my prejudices to your deep-rooted faith. And who shall say whether John Wesley's creed is right or wrong? It is a comfortable doctrine most assuredly that sin brings us closer to Christ, and that the deeper we sink in the mire the nearer we are to the stars.'

'Oh, Oswald, you don't understand. It is our consciousness of sin that brings us to the Fount of grace, not the sin.'

They were very happy at this Christmastide. It was one of those green yules to which popular prejudice accredits the filling of churchyards, although the *Times* obituary goes far to prove the good old-fashioned Christmas, with his icicle diadem and his mantle of snow, Death's sterner coadjutor. Blackbirds were merry in the woods at even-song, and mistaken dog-violets struggled into untimely bloom under the shelter of tall hedges. Oswald dined with his father upon the great festival, and, as soon as he decently

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could do so, stole away from the firelit dining-room, leaving the old Squire asleep in his big arm-chair, where he would in all likelihood slumber peacefully until bed-time, when he would awake with wonderful briskness to go his round of the lower chambers, and see that every bolt was duly drawn against thieves and burglars, for although half a dozen spoons and forks, and a pair of salt-cellars with corpulent bodies and attenuated legs comprised the utmost display of silver that ever decorated the Squire's table, there was a goodly store of old tankards, venison-dishes, souptureens, and smaller plate stowed away in the great oak closet in old Mr. Pentreath's bedroom.

Oswald walked straight to the minister's house—but not quite so fast as he had been accustomed to walk in the same direction. The air was wondrously mild; the western sky a pale primrose; the wooded horizon-line bluer than it is wont to be. It was a winter twilight that might tempt a man to linger, and Oswald was full of thought. Early in March—so soon—for him as for Naomi, that approaching marriage was an event to be contemplated with wonder, almost with disbelief. His apprenticeship, which at the beginning had seemed to him as long as Jacob's, was nearly ended. His patience and truth and constancy were to have their reward.

'She is the best and noblest of women; where could I find so perfect a wife? I do not believe there is a flaw in her goodness. I always feel myself a better man when I am with her. Yes, that is what a wife ought to be.'

And then in his low legate tones he repeated those familiar lines of Wordsworth's—

#### A perfect woman, nobly planned-

from a poem which seems to concentrate in thirty lines all that can ever be said or sung in praise of womankind.

He could see the ruddy firelight shining in the minister's best parlour as he came round the bend of the road. It was tea-time, and they were all assembled there, no doubt—Aunt Judith in her best gown, which was such an excellent fit across the chest as to be faintly suggestive of a strait waistcoat; Naomi sitting in her favourite corner with the red light flickering upon her glossy hair, and those [deep dark eyes of hers full of grave thoughts; and on the other side of the hearth that child-like face and figure, the very type of innocent and guileless maidenhood, his idea of Goethe's Gretchen, nestling close to Joshua's side, looking up at him now and then with worshipping eyes.

Oswald saw the family scene from afar off, as if it had been a mirage-picture. He turned the handle of the door and went in. The passage was dimly lighted by an oil-lamp. He knocked at the parlour door, by way of ceremony, and the minister's deep voice bade him enter. Yes, the scene was just as his imagination had showed it to him—Aunt Judith seated at the tea-board, the old brown Bible at Joshua's right hand, Cynthia's fair hair looking like palest gold in the uncertain light, Naomi's dark head drooping thoughtfully, Jim screwed as close as possible to the fire, stooping to roast chestnuts between the bars—a peaceful home-picture. They all looked up and gave him welcome, but Naomi's gratified smile was worth all the rest.

'I did not think you would be able to come,' she exclaimed.

Luckily for me, my father indulged in a heavier dinner than usual and fell asleep immediately after it. But I should have contrived to come under any circumstances. I hope I am in time for a cup of your excellent tea, Miss Haggard? It is not everyone can make such tea as yours.'

'Everyone hasn't been making tea in the same pot for five-andtwenty years,' replied Aunt Judith, obviously mollified by this compliment. 'You want to know your pot and to know your tea if it's to be worth drinking.'

Miss Haggard dispensed the beverage with an abnormal stiffness peculiar to festive occasions and best gowns. Social gatherings of a cheerful nature did not induce Aunt Judith to unbend. On occasions of this kind she assumed a spinal inflexibility which, in her mind, was the surest indication of a virtuous bringing-up and a polite education. And this backboard politeness was accepted at Combhollow, where Miss Haggard was considered 'quite the lady.'

'I don't know what's coming to the women in this place,' said Aunt Judith presently, when there was a pause in the conversation, but I think they must have set their hearts on spending money one against the other. I counted four new bonnets in chapel this morning, without counting Mrs. Spradgers's, that had been fresh trimmed, and she only had it in October, for I sold her the ribbon for it—a lovely maroon with an orange spot.'

'I hope you had something better to do in chapel than count the new bonnets and think badly of your neighbours, Judith,' remonstrated Joshua.

'I've got eyes in chapel as well as out of chapel,' answered Judith, and there's times when the most serious-minded Christian can use 'em—while the hymn's being given out, for instance; our time's our own then, I should think. All I can say is, that if

milliners' made-up bonnets—drawn silk trumpery that one heavy shower will spoil—don't bring Combhollow to ruin, nothing else will. There's Mrs. Flitton, that I've sold many a serviceable straw to in days gone by, decked out in a velvet cottage with a bird of Paradise from Barnstaple. It was luxury of this kind that led to the French king losing his head when we were young folks, Joshua. I've heard you say as much many a time, so don't deny it.'

'If you thought less of your neighbours' shortcomings, Judith-

'I can't help thinking of them when I've got fourteen straw bonnets, best quality, left out of last summer's stock. The shape will be old next year, I dare say. Fashions change so quick nowadays. I shall have to sell 'em to the servant girls, half-price.'

'How you do worry about a few shillings, aunt,' cried Jim in a disgusted tone. 'We make more on our side of the shop in a day than you can lose on your side in a week.'

'Thank you, Mr. Pert. When your father loses money by my department I hope he'll tell me so. I haven't heard of it yet.'

'Then why do you make such a fuss about half a dozen straw bonnets? You said you were going to lose by 'em.'

- 'If I lose by my bonnets I shall come home upon my ribbons, you may be sure, Mr. James; and when you know the grocery business as well as I know the drapery you may take me to task, not sooner.'
- 'We won't talk any more about the shop this evening, Judith,' said Joshua. 'We may be too assiduous in business.'
- 'The Bible tells us not to be slothful,' replied the aggrieved Judith, 'but I dare say it vexes Mrs. Haggard to hear such talk. She'd have liked to have married a bishop, with his carriage and pair.'

This was a hit at Cynthia's dislike to the shop, which the girl had revealed involuntarily upon one or two occasions.

- I should be glad if my husband had nothing to distract his thoughts from his chapel and his schools,' answered Cynthia.
   Any man can keep a shop. It seems a hard thing that his time should be taken up with selling grocery.'
- 'Does it seem a hard thing that he's got a comfortable home and money in the bank, and a fortune to give his daughter?' demanded Aunt Judith. 'He wouldn't have got those out of Little Bethel.'

Cynthia sighed. It seemed to her that it would have been a far happier life to have wandered with her husband from village to village, tending him and comforting him in his pilgrimage, than to lead this prosperous life in a settled home, where there was so much to draw his mind away from his great work. And was it for the sake of a substantial house and daily food, for money heaped up

in the bank, that the teacher consented so to limit his sphere of usefulness—nay, in a manner to hide his light under a bushel? Naomi had talked to Cynthia of that missionary life which seemed so glorious to her, and the younger girl had caught the enthusiasm of the elder. She felt as if her husband's true vocation lay far away beyond the wide strange seas among the races that had never heard of the Christian's God.

Happily for household peace upon this festive occasion the clearing away of the tea-things, and the retirement of Judith to wash them, put an end to a discussion that had tended towards unpleasantness.

Naomi and Oswald were able to enjoy their quiet talk on one side of the hearth, while Joshua read one of his favourite Puritan divines on the other, Cynthia sitting by him in meek silence, full of sweet thoughts and dreamy aspirations after an unknown good. James went on roasting his chestnuts, which ever and anon exploded with a fizz and a splutter, to his own delight and the consternation of the assembly.

'How pretty she is,' whispered Oswald to Naomi, contemplating Cynthia's thoughtful face during a pause in his talk. He watched her with the same pleasure and interest he might have felt in the contemplation of a pretty child—something soft and sweet and helpless, which he looked down upon from the altitude of his mature years.

'Yes, she is very pretty, and very good. My father is quite happy in his marriage.'

'Why does she never come with us in our walks? It must be dull for her of an afternoon when your father is out.'

' She goes for a walk with Jim sometimes.'

'But why not with us?'

'I don't know. She's very shy. I rather think she's afraid of you.'

'Afraid of me! Oh, that's too ridiculous.'

'She thinks you a very fine gentleman.'

'That's delightful! You know how much of the fine gentleman there is about me, Naomi. I am afraid she must be rather silly.'

'Oh no, indeed. She is wonderfully bright and quick in everything.'

'Is she? I should hardly have thought her so. We are talking of you, Mrs. Haggard,' pursued Oswald, abandoning his confidential, half-whispering tone; 'I have been asking Naomi why you never join us in our afternoon rambles. Perhaps you don't care for woods and hills?' 'Yes I do,' answered Cynthia: 'I am very fond of this beautiful place. It is prettier than anything I ever saw before.'

'I should think so,' said Aunt Judith, sharply. 'It's bare enough in the mining country where you come from, I've always heard say.'

'You should come with us sometimes, Mrs. Haggard,' said Oswald.

'Yes,' said Joshua, looking up from his book. 'It would be better for you to go out of doors oftener, Cynthia. I find you sitting reading or working in the parlour every afternoon when I come home to tea.'

'There's nothing so bad as poring over a book for a young woman's spine,' said Aunt Judith. 'Mrs. Haggard will be round-shouldered before she's thirty if she doesn't take care.'

Judith's backbone was her tower of strength. Years might creep on, the insidious approach of age might show itself in a sprinkling of grey hairs among the dark ones—by crow's feet at the corners of the eyes—but Judith's spine defied the assailant Time. It straightened itself against the enemy, and at eight-and-forty Miss Haggard was more erect than she had been at eighteen.

'Yes, my love, you must really have more air and exercise,' said Joshua.

Cynthia gave a faint sigh. She was very happy, on such an evening as this, in her husband's company, sitting next him, stealing her hand into his now and then, or leaning against his shoulder to read a page or so of the book he was reading; but there were times in her life when she felt as if she belonged to no one. Thus it was that she had taken to pore over books, or to sit long at some laborious piece of plain needlework. There was so little for her to do: she was never happier than when Joshua allowed her to go and sit in some stuffy cottage, beside the bed of sickness or decrepitude, and read the Book she loved. She felt then that she too had her mission in the world, and that she was in some wise worthy of the husband who had chosen her.

Not a festive Christmas evening this for those who have been wont to associate the occasion with cheery family circles, merry children, old-fashioned games, cards, forfeits, and snapdragon—the good old traditional Christmas immortalised by Washington Irving and Charles Dickens. A pack of cards had never been seen in Mr. Haggard's house, and forfeits or snapdragon he would have accounted childish folly. His children had never been gratified with such empty delights. In the day when he took up John Wesley as his guide and model, he put away from him all small pleasures, all sensual gratifications. At heart he was an ascetic,

and it grated a little upon his sense of right to see the board loaded with cold turkey and chine and plum-pudding upon this particular evening. He would have been happier eating his dry bread and hard cheese, and feeling that he was denying himself while all the rest of the world were feasting and revelling. was a touch of the Pharisee's spiritual pride here, perhaps, but the pride had its source in that idea of calling and special grace which was implanted in the preacher's heart. Had he not been chosen and elected in the days of his youth, when he first felt himself called to do God's work? He could name the day and hour. It was no slow awakening to solemn truths, no gradual leavening of the human mind with spiritual grace; but a sudden and absolute conversion—an instantaneous call to righteousness. Yesterday a child of wrath, to-day the heir of salvation, a citizen of heaven, an inhabitant of eternity. Wondrous, mysterious had been this Pentecostal season; he looked back at it with love and pride. pitiful a price had he paid for so great a treasure, in surrendering the transient pleasures of this world!

And now Heaven had rewarded him with the sweetest of all earthly blessings—the blessed joys of home.

He looked at his daughter, happy by her lover's side; at his son, healthy, intelligent, active, dutiful; at his useful sister, rough and bitter, like medicinal herbs, but a faithful servant; at his wife, dearest of all; and thanked God for these manifold blessings.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

#### CYNTHIA TRIES TO BE USEFUL.

MARCH had come; the anemones were white in the woods, the gummy chestnut-buds were bursting in sheltered corners of the land, there was a perfume of violets in the lanes, and primroses began to peep out like pale earth-stars, amidst tender green tufts fringed with the ragged disorder of last year's leaves. The gaudy daffodils were flaunting everywhere. March was growing old, but Naomi Haggard's wedding had not yet come to pass. The date had been fixed, and all things had gone prosperously till within a week of the appointed day, when the Squire, returning on horseback from Barnstaple, where he had been to take counsel with his lawyer as to the ejectment of a troublesome tenant, had been overtaken by a heavy fall of rain, which lasted with a cruel persistency throughout his homeward journey. Instead of immediately resorting to a hot bath and dry clothes as a cure, Mr. Pentreath had sat by the dining-room fire, while he solaced himself with a tumbler of hot brandy-and-water, before changing his raiment. The con-

sequences of the wet ride and of his imprudence showed themselves next morning in a sharp attack of bronchitis, which speedily degenerated into inflammation of the lungs. Before the week was out the Squire's life was in danger, and Naomi's wedding was deferred to an indefinite period.

Oswald was in much distress about his father's state. They had not loved each other tenderly, but the son was soft-hearted, and felt a curious aching pity for the lonely old man lying on his death-bed, more friendless than the lowliest hind on his estate. The family surgeon and sole doctor of Combhollow, who attended all the families round about, and killed or cured by the pharmacopæia without let or hindrance from any opposing practitioner, declared that the Squire's only chance of recovering lay not in medicine, or bloodletting, or blistering, but in good nursing. And who was to nurse this peevish, cantankerous old man, who, while groaning in the agonies of mortal disease, would grudge the nurse her feed and feel an extra pang at every meal she ate? The professional nurses of Combhollow were ancient females of the sibyl or witch type, women one might expect to meet on solitary moors, or in fever-haunted swamps, gathering simples under a stormy moon, and whose ignorance was only matched in degree by their cunning and cruelty. The housemaid at the Grange, who had such a conscientious regard for the oak panelling that she would begin beeswaxing at six o'clock in the morning, was not so deeply attached to her old master. When Oswald appealed to her for aid she told him she had never been where there was sickness, and did not know much about invalids' ways, and that she should scream if anyone asked her to handle a leech. The housekeeper was old and purblind, and cooked her dinners by the aid of habit and memory rather than by any existing Oswald could not trust his father's life to her. sense.

In this difficulty he naturally applied to Miss Haggard as a person likely to have all the resources of Combhollow at her fingers' ends.

'Do I know any woman that would go out sick-nursing?' she exclaimed, repeating Oswald's question. 'If I know one such I know twenty. There's nothing people won't undertake to do if you'll pay them for it. But if you ask me to recommend you a nurse for your father, Mr. Pentreath, that's quite another thing. There isn't a woman who goes out nursing in Combhollow that I'd trust with the life of a kitten, if I wanted the kitten to grow up to a cat.'

'That's conclusive,' said Oswald despondently. 'Yet I suppose people in Combhollow get nursed somehow when they're ill."

'Somehow; yes, that's about it. Sometimes they die, and some-

times Providence is extra kind to them, and pulls them through their troubles, nursing and all.'

This was depressing. Oswald sat looking at the fire gloomily, wondering what he ought to do. It was tea-time. Aunt Judith was in her accustomed place before the tea-tray. Naomi stood by the mantlepiece looking at her lover, too much disturbed by his despondency to obey that rigorous code of etiquette which her aunt had imposed upon the household, and in which sitting down to meals the instant they were ready was a stringent article. Cynthia had taken her place and was cutting bread-and-butter for Jim, with a calm matronly air which became the fair young face. She was always pleased to be useful, were it in the smallest detail.

'I wish I could nurse your father, Oswald,' said Naomi earnestly.

'But you can't,' exclaimed Judith with prompt severity. 'A pretty thing indeed for you to go and live in the Squire's house before you've any right. A nice scandal there'd be in Combhollow. You, a minister's daughter too! You ought to have more sense than to talk of such a thing.'

'I can't see that it would be wrong,' cried Oswald, with some show of heat. 'Who has a better right to be at home in my father's house than my future wife?'

'If young men like you were able to draw a line between right and wrong, right and wrong wouldn't get mixed up so often as they do,' replied Judith sententiously. 'As to Naomi making herself at home at the Grange till she's Mrs. Pentreath, its out of the question, and she ought to have known it. Besides which, she knows about as much of sick-nursing as a babe in its cradle.'

'God would teach me,' said Naomi, 'and my love for Oswald would make me strong to help his father.'

'I believe that, Naomi,' exclaimed Oswald with a grateful look.

'Let me nurse the Squire,' said Cynthia, with a subdued eagerness. 'I have so little to do at home. I should hardly be missed. And I do know something about sickness. I nursed Miss Webling, a lady who had the quinsy very badly. The doctor thought she would die; and I put on leeches and blisters, and sat up with her fifteen nights. And I have nursed the poor people here, haven't I, Joshua?' she asked, looking up at her husband, who had this moment entered the room.

'Yes, love; you have been a ministering angel by many sickbeds, and you would have done more if I had suffered you. But what is all this talk about nursing?'

'If some of you will sit down,' remonstrated Judith, 'I'll pour out the tea. But I don't feel as if anybody wanted it while you're standing about higgledy-piggledy.'

Thus reproved, Naomi took her seat meekly, and Oswald, feeling that the reproof applied with double force to him as a visitor, seated himself in a desponding attitude at a corner of the table.

'I want to nurse old Mr. Pentreath, Joshua,' said Cynthia.
'Miss Haggard says there is no nurse to be trusted in Combhollow, and the doctor says the old gentleman must have good nursing. Will you let me go to the Grange for a little while and sit up with him, as I did with Miss Webling?'

Joshua watched her earnest face with a tender smile.

'Why, my love, how anxious you are! And do you think you know enough about sickness—that you would have strength for such a task?'

'It would be a good work, and I should do it with all my heart. God would give me strength and knowledge. I have no fear. I feel often that my life here is of very little use. I am never happier than when you let me visit the siek people. Let me go to the

Grange, Joshua, and nurse poor Mr. Pentreath.'

'You are too good to offer such a thing,' cried Oswald, wondering at the ardour of this delicate, flower-like creature. 'It would be a troublesome task. You have no notion how cross my poor old father is. He abuses the doctor in a most ferocious style—accuses him of picking his pocket. Our housemaid will scarcely go near him. There is a scrub of a girl who works about the house under everyone else, a stupid good-natured thing, too much accustomed to hard words to mind them, and she is the only creature I can get to stay in my father's room; but she is clumsy and sleepy.'

'Do you really wish to go, Cynthia?' asked Joshua seriously.

To his mind there was nothing unnatural in this desire of his young wife's. He belonged to a community in which to minister to the sick was a paramount duty, in which affliction was a period of closer brotherhood, a drawing together of those links which bound the little flock to one another at all times. True, that the Squire was an ungodly person, outside that circle; but he had been in a manner united to Joshua's household by his son's choice of Naomi. Here was a sick man to be snatched from the jaws of Death; here was something higher and nobler, a soul to be saved from the clutch of Satan. That the Squire's body must perish was, in all probability, inevitable—an event not to be staved off by leechings and blisterings, or all the resources of medicine; but there was a great battle to be fought for that immortal part of him, that impalpable, indestructible spark destined for an eternal future of good or evil.

What had the Church of England—of those slumberous days—done for the Squire? Well, it had taken tithe of his substance,

and thereby secured to itself his antipathy; it had preached diluted Tillotson, South, and Barrow over his head while he dozed in the noontide sun; it had christened and married him, and held itself in readiness to bury him; and for the rest it had civilly and obligingly let him alone.

It seemed to Joshua Haggard that if his wife succoured the Squire in his fight with disease and death he too could be by the bed-side to defend the sinner against the onslaughts of his invisible foe; for Joshua's positive theology had never been troubled by any doubt of the reality and personality of man's first tempter and perpetual adversary.

'If you really feel that you have a call for this good work, Cynthia, I should be sorry to forbid your obeying it,' he said, after a thoughtful pause.

'It seems too bold to say that I am called to do it,' answered his wife humbly, 'but indeed, Joshua, my heart is drawn towards the poor lonely old man in his sickness and pain.'

'Then you shall go, my dear,' said Joshua decisively.

Cynthia rose as if to depart that moment.

'God bless you for that permission,' cried Oswald.

'You may as well wait till tea's finished,' exclaimed Judith tartly; 'other people want their teas, if you don't. We didn't use to have tea in such a fashion.'

Whereupon Cynthia resumed her seat meekly, and begged pardon of the authorities for this breach of the household law.

'I don't know how to thank you both,' said Oswald,—'you for your generous offer, Mrs. Haggard, or your husband for his goodness in letting you obey your benevolent inclination; but I am more grateful than I can say. I will take care that you are not over-fatigued by your task. Phœbe—that's the girl I spoke of just now—will do anything you want. She'd work till she dropped, I believe, poor girl, and only requires to be taught. My poor father was delirious last night. That won't frighten you, I hope—if his mind wanders?'

'No,' said Cynthia; 'I was sitting with a poor woman yesterday who was light-headed. She talked of all kinds of strange things. Yet every now and then she spoke quite clearly, and followed the sense when I read to her. I shall not be frightened.'

After tea, when the bondage of etiquette was loosened a little, Naomi stole to her young stepmother's side and kissed her tenderly.

'I am so grateful to you, Cynthia,' she said.

'Dear Naomi, there's no reason for gratitude or praise. I am only doing my duty. I am sorry you were not permitted to perform this task, dear, as I know it would have seemed sweet to you, for Oswald's sake.'

#### All for Love.

#### BY JOSEPH KNIGHT.

WE stood at twilight in the midmost glade—
Stood close together, spake not, nor did move,
But heard the whispering sound the elm-trees made
For Love.

O'er all the scene there hung a solemn hush, Broken by amorous cooing of the dove, Or where in shadiest covert piped the thrush For Love.

I seized her hand in that entrancèd calm—
The small white hand with mine that scarcely strove—
And kissed the fingers twice, and twice the palm,
For Love.

Then the pent waters brake, and face met face, And lip met lip, and soul and body clove, And swayed together in a long embrace For Love.

The summer comes again, and she is not;
Once more I stand in the remembered grove,
With painful steps revisiting the spot
For Love.

A little while, my queen, my saint, my bride, I follow where thy spirit waits above— Not long; and haply men shall say, 'He died For Love.'

# Dr. ROOKF'S

who wish to preserve health, thus prolong life, should read Dr. Rooke's "Anti-Lancet, or Handy Guide to Domestic Medicine," which can be had GRATIS from any Chemist, or POST FREE from Dr. Rooke, Scarborough.

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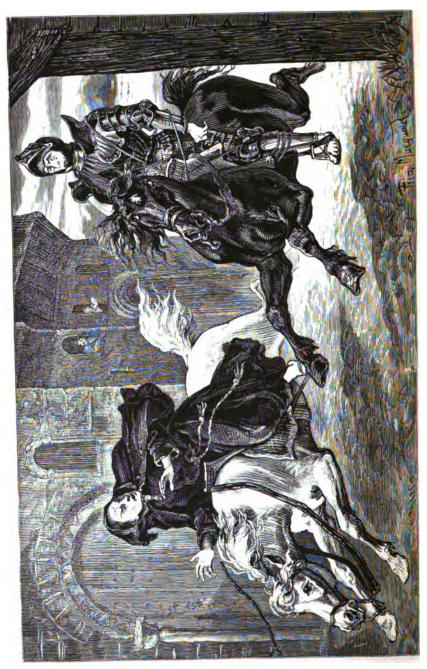
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# BELGRAVIA.

JUNE 1876.

# GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES READE.

# 1. The Unight's Secret.

THOMAS ERPINGHAM was knighted, by Henry the Fourth, for good and valiant service.

This Sir Thomas Erpingham, Knight of the Garter, afterwards fought by the side of Henry the Fifth in his French wars, and was made Warden of the Cinque Ports; but retired to Norwich, his native place. He married a beautiful, pious lady, and, after a turbulent career, and the horrors of war, desired to end his days in charity. Being wealthy, and of one mind, he and Lady Erpingham built a goodly church in the city, and also erected and endowed a religious house for twelve monks and a prior, close to the Knight's house, and parted only by a high wall.

But, though the retired soldier wished to be at peace with all men, two of his friars were of another mind; Friar John and Friar Richard hated each other, and could by no means be reconciled; neither had ever a good word for t'other: and at last Friar John gave Friar Richard a fair excuse for his invectives. Lady Erpingham came ever to matins in the convent, and Friar John would always await her coming, and attend her through the cloister, with ducks, and cringes, and open adulation; whereat she smiled, being, in truth, a most innocent lady, affable to all, and slow to think ill of any man.

But Richard denounced John as a licentious monk; and some watched, and whispered; others rebuked Richard; for it was against the monastic rule to put an ill construction where the matter might be innocent.

But Richard stood his ground; and, unfortunately, Richard was right; misunderstanding the lady's courtesy and charity, brother John thought his fawning advances were encouraged, and

this bred in him such impudence, that one day he sent her a fulsome love-letter, and had the hardihood to beg for a private interview.

The lady, when she opened this letter, could hardly believe her senses; and, at last, as gentlewomen will be both unsuspicious, and suspicious, in the wrong place, she made up her mind that the poor, good, ridiculous friar could never have been so wicked as to write this; nay, but it was her husband's doing, and a trial of her virtue; he was older than herself; and great love is oft tainted with jealousy.

This brought tears into her eyes, to think she should be doubted; but soon anger dried them, and she took occasion to put the letter suddenly into Sir Richard's hand, and fixed her eyes on him so keenly that, if there had been a flaw in his conjugal armour, no doubt those eyes had pierced it.

The Knight read the letter, and turned black and white with rage; his eyes sparkled with fury, and he looked so fearful, that the lady was very sorry she had shown him the letter, and begged him not to take a madman's folly to heart.

'Not take it to heart!' said he. 'What! these beggarly shavelings that I have housed and fed, and so lessened my estate and thine,—they shall corrupt thee, and rob me of my one earthly treasure! sit thou down and write.'

'Write-Richard-what?-to whom?'

'Do as I bid thee, dame,' said he, sternly, 'and no more words.'
Those were days when husbands commanded, and wives obeyed;
so she sat down, trembling, and took the pen.

Then he made her write a letter back to the friar, and say she compassionated his love, and her husband was to ride towards London that night, and her servant, on whom she could depend, should admit him to her by a side door of the house.

Friar John, at the appointed time, took care to be in the town—for he knew the lay-brother, who kept the gate of the priory, would not let him out so late. He came to the side door, and was admitted by a servant of the Knight, a reckless old soldier who cared for neither man nor devil, as the saying is, but only for his master. This man took him into a room, and left him; then went for the Knight—he was not far off. Now the unlucky monk, being come to the conquest of a beautiful lady, as he vainly thought, had fine linen on, and perfumed like a civet. The Knight smelt these perfumes, and rushed in upon him with his man, like dogs upon the odoriferous fox, and, in a fury, without giving him time to call for help, or to say one prayer, strangled him, and left him dead.

But Death breeds calm; the Knight's rage abated that moment,

and he saw he had done a foul and remorseless deed. He would have given half his estate to bring the offender back to life. Half his estate? his whole estate, ay, and his life, were now gone from him: they were forfeited to the law. So did he pass from rage to remorse, and from remorse to fear. The rough soldier, seeing him so stricken, made light of all, except the danger of discovery. 'Come, noble sir,' said he, 'let us bestir ourselves, and take him back to the priory, and there bestow him; so shall we ne'er be known in it.'

Thus urged, the Knight roused himself, and he and his man brought the body out, and got it as far as the wall that did part the house from the monastery. Here they were puzzled awhile; but the man remembered a short ladder in the back yard, that was high enough for this job. So they set the ladder, and, with much ado, got the body up it, and then drew the ladder up, and set it again on the other side; and so, with infinite trouble, the soldier got him into the priory.

The next thing was to make it appear Friar John had died a natural death. Accordingly he set him up on a rickety chair he found in the yard; balanced him, and left him; mounted the wall again, let himself down, and then dropped into the Knight's premises.

He found the Knight walking in great perturbation, and they went into the house.

'Now good master,' said this stout soldier, 'go you to bed, and think no more on't.'

'To bed!' groaned the Knight, in agony. 'Why should I go there? I cannot sleep. Methinks I shall never sleep again.'

'Then give me the cellar key, good sir. I'll draw a stoup of Canary.'

'Ay, wine!' cried the Knight: 'formy blood runs cold in my veins.'
The servant lighted a rousing fire in the dining hall, and warmed and spiced some generous wine, after the fashion of the day; and there sat these two, over the fire, awaiting daylight and its revelations.

But, meantime, the night was fruitful in events. The prior, informed of Friar Richard's uncharitable interpretations, had condemned him to vigil and prayer on the bare pebbles of the yard, from midnight until three of the clock. But the sly Richard, at dusk, had conveyed a chair into the yard, to keep his knees off the cold hard stones.

At midnight, when he came to his enforced devotions, lo! there sat a figure in the chair. He started, and took it for the prior, seated there to lecture him for luxury; but peeping, he soon discovered it was Friar John.

He walked round and round him, talking at him. 'Is it brother John, or brother Richard, who is to keep vigil to-night? I know but one friar in all this house would sit star-gazing in his brother's chair, when that brother wants it to pray in,' &c.

Brother John vouchsafed no reply; and this stung brother Richard, and he burned for revenge. 'So be it then,' said he, 'since my place is taken, I will tell the prior, and keep vigil some other night.' With this he retired, and slammed a door. having thus disarmed, as he conceived, brother John's suspicion, he took up an enormous pebble, and slipped back on tip-toe, and getting near the angle of a wall, he flung his great pebble at brother John, and slipped hastily behind the wall: nevertheless, as he hid, he had the satisfaction of seeing his pebble, which weighed about a stone, strike brother John on the nape of the neck, and then there was a lumping noise and a great clatter, and Friar Richard chuckled with pride and delight at the success of his throw. However, he waited some minutes before he emerged, and then walked briskly out, like a new comer. There lay John flat, and the chair upset. Brother Richard ran to him, charged with hypocritical sympathy, and found his enemy's face very white. He got alarmed, and felt his heart: he was stone dead.

The poor monk, whose hatred was of a mere feminine sort, and had never been deadly, was seized with remorse, and he beat his breast, and prayed in earnest, instead of repeating Pater-nosters, 'precess ine mente dictas,' as the great Erasmus calls them.

But other feelings soon succeeded: his enmity to the deceased was well known, and this would be called murder, if the body was found in that yard; and his own life would pay the forfeit.

Casting his eyes round for a place, where he might hide the body, he saw a ladder standing against the wall. This surprised him; but he was in no condition to puzzle over small riddles. Terror gave him force: he lifted the body, crawled up the ladder, and placed the body on the wall: it was wider than they build now: then he drew up the ladder, set it on the other side, and took his ghastly load down safely. Then, being naturally cunning and having his neck to save, he went and hid the ladder, took up the body, staggered with it as far as the porch of the Knight's house, and set it there bolt upright against one of the pillars.

As he carried it out of the yard he heard a window in the Knight's house open. He could not see where the window was, nor whether he was watched, and recognised: but he feared the worst, and, such was his terror, he resolved to fly the place and bury himself in some distant monastery under another name.

But how? He was lame, and could not go ten miles in a day, whereas a hundred miles was little enough to make him secure.

After homicide, theft is no great matter: he resolved to borrow the maltster's mare, and turn her adrift, when she had carried him beyond the hue and cry. So he went and knocked up the maltster, and told him the convent wanted flour, and he was to go betimes to the miller for a sack thereof. Now the convent was a good customer to the maltster; so he lent Friar Richard the mare, at a word, and told him where to find the saddle and bridle.

Richard fed the mare for a journey, and saddled her; then he mounted, and rode at a foot-pace past the convent, meaning to go quietly through the town, making no stir, then away like the wind.

But, as he paced by the Knight's house, he cast a look askant to see if that ghastly object still sat in the porch.

No, the porch was empty.

What might that mean? Had he come to life?—Had the murder been discovered?—He began to wonder and tremble.

While he was in this mood, there was a great clatter behind him of horse's feet, and clashing armour, and he felt he was pursued.

The Knight and his man sat together, drinking hot spiced wine, and awaiting daylight. The Knight would not go to bed, yet he wanted a change. 'Will daylight never come?' said he.

'Twill be here anon,' said the soldier: 'in half an hour.'

The Knight said no, it would never come.

The soldier said he would go and look at the sky, and tell him for certain.

'Be not long away,' said the Knight, with a shiver, 'or the dead friar will be taking thy place here, and pledging me.'

'Stuff!' said the soldier: 'he'll never trouble you more.'

With this he marched out to consult the night, and almost ran against the dead friar seated in the porch, white and glaring; this was too much even for the iron soldier; he uttered a sharp yell, staggered back, and burst into the room, gasping for breath. He got close to his master, and stammered out, 'The dead man!—sitting in the porch!'—and crossed himself energetically, the first time these thirty years.

The Knight stared and trembled: and so they drew close together, with their eyes over their shoulders.

'Wine!' cried the Knight.

'Ay,' said the soldier: 'but I go not alone. He'll be squatting on the cask else.'

So they went together to the cellar, often looking round, and fetched two bottles.

They drank them out, and the good wine, falling upon more of the sort, made them madder and bolder. They rolled along, holding on by one another, to the porch, and there they stood and looked at the dead friar, and shuddered.

But the soldier swore a great oath, and vowed he should not stay there to get them hanged. Thereupon a furious fit of recklessness succeeded to their terror: they got a suit of rusty armour and fastened it on the body; then they saddled an old war-horse that was kept in the stable only as a reminiscence, and tied the friar's body on to him with many cords; they opened the stable door, and pricked the old war-horse with their daggers, that he clattered out into the road with a bound and a great rattling of rusty armour.

Now, as ill luck would have it, Friar Richard and his borrowed mare were pacing demurely through the town scarce fifty yards ahead. The old horse nosed the mare, and, being left to choose his road, took very naturally after her; but when he got near her the monk looked round and saw the ghastly rider. He gave a yell so piercing it waked the whole street, and, for lack of spurs, drove his bare heels into the mare's side: she cantered down the street at an easy pace, the fearful pageant cantered after; the friar kept turning and yelling, and the windows kept opening and heads popped out to see, and by-and-by doors opened and a few early risers joined in the pursuit, wondering and curious.

The cavalcade never cleared the town of Norwich; the friar, in the blindness of despair, turned his mare up what seemed to him an open lane; but there was no exit; his dead pursuer came up with him, and he threw himself off, and cried 'Mercy! Mercy! mea culpa!—I confess it—I confess it! only take that horrible face from me!' and in his despair he owned that he had slain brother John.

Then some led the horse and his ghastly load away, and wondered sore; but others hauled Friar John to justice; and he believing it was a miracle, and Heaven's hand upon him, persisted in his confession, and was cast into prison to abide his trial.

He had not to wait long. In those days the law did not tarry for judges of assize to come round the country now and then. Each town had its Mayor and its alderman, any one of whom could try and hang a man if need was. So Friar Richard was tried next week.

By this time he had somewhat recovered his spirits and his love of life: he defended himself, and said that indeed he had slain his brother; but it was by misadventure; he had thrown a stone at him in some anger, but not to do him deadly harm. This he said with many tears. But, on the other hand, it was proved that he had long hated brother John; that he had got out of the priory without passing the door, and had borrowed the maltster's mare on a false pretence; and finally marks of strangulation had been found on the dead man's throat. All this amazed and overpowered the poor friar; and, although his terror at the apparition was not easily to be reconciled with his having been the person who tied the body on the horse, and though one alderman, shrewder than the rest, said he thought a great deal lay behind that, yet upon the whole it was thought the safest and most usual course to hang him. So he was condemned to die-in three days' time.

The friar, seeing his end so near, struggled no more against his fate. He sent for the prior to confess him, and told the truth with deep sorrow and humility: 'Mea culpa! mea culpa!' he cried. 'If I had not hated my brother and broken our rule, then this had not come upon me.'

Then the prior gave him full absolution, and went away exceeding sorrowful, and doubting the wisdom and justice of laymen, and in particular of those who were about to hang brother Richard for wilful murder. This preyed upon his mind, and he went to Sir Richard Erpingham to utter his misgivings, and pray the good Knight to work upon the sheriff, who was his friend, for a respite until the matter could be looked into more closely.

The Knight was not at home, but my lady saw the prior, and learned his errand. 'Alas, good father!' said she, 'Sir Richard is not here; he is gone to London this two days.'

The prior went home sick at heart.

Even so long ago as this they hung from Norwich Castle. So the rude gallows was put up at seven o'clock, and at eight brother Richard must hang and turn in the wind like a weather-cock.

But before that fatal hour a King's messenger galloped into the city and spurred into the courtyard of the castle. Very soon the Sheriff was reading a parchment signed by the King's own hand: the gallows was taken down, and the people dispersed by degrees. Some felt ill used. They thought appointments should be kept, or else not made.

At night Friar Richard, not reprieved, but, to the amazement of smaller functionaries, freely pardoned by his Sovereign in a handwriting a housemaid of this day would blush for, but with a

glorious seal the size of an apple-fritter, crept forth into the night and, gliding along the streets with his head down, slipped into the priory, and was lost to the world for many a long day. Indeed he was confined to his cell for a month, by order of the prior, and ordered to pray thrice a day for the soul of brother John.

When brother Richard emerged from his cell he was a changed man. He had gathered amid the thorns of tribulation the wholesome fruit of humility, and the immortal flower of charity. Henceforth no bitter word ever fell from his lips, though for a time he had many provocations, and 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' was the rule of his heart. He made himself of little account, and outlived all enmities. He lived much in his cell, and prayed so often for the soul of brother John, that at last he got to love him dead whom he had hated living.

Time rolled on. The Knight's hair turned grey and the good prior died.

Then there was a great commotion in the little priory, and three or four of the leading friars each hoped to be prior.

That appointment lay with Sir Richard Erpingham. He attended the funeral of the late prior, and then desired the sub-prior to convene the monks. 'Good brothers,' said he, 'your prior is brother Richard. I pray you to invest him forthwith, and yield him due love and obedience.'

The Knight retired, and the monks stared at each other awhile, and then obeyed, since there was no help for it: they invested brother Richard in due form; and such is the magic of station that, in one moment, they began to look on him with different eyes.

The new prior bore his dignity so meekly that he disarmed all hostility. His great rule of life was still 'Honi soit qui mal y pense,' and there is no course more apt to conciliate respect and good will. The Knight showed him favour and esteem; the monks learned to respect, and by-and-by to revere him: but he never ceased to reproach himself, and say masses for the soul of brother John.

The years rolled on. The Knight's grey hair turned white; and one day he sent for the prior, and said to him 'Good Father, I have grave matter to entertain you withal.'

'Speak, worshipful sir,' said the prior.

The Knight looked at him awhile, but seemed ill at ease, and as one that hath resolved to speak, but is loth to begin. At last he said, 'Sir, there be men that waste their goods in sin, or meanly hoard them till their last hour, yet leave them freely to Mother Church after their death, when they can no longer enjoy them. Others there be whose breasts are laden with a secret crime they

ought to confess, and clear some worthy man suspected falsely; yet they will not tell till they come to die. Methinks this is to be charitable too late, and just, when justice can neither cost a man ought, nor profit his neighbour. Therefore, not to be one of these, I will reveal to you now a deed that sits heavy on my conscience.'

'You would confess to me, my son?'

'As man to man, sir, but not as penitent to his confessor; for that were no merit in me: it would be no more than bury my secret in a fleshly grave. Nay, what I tell to you, you shall tell to all the world, if good may come of it.'

Here the Knight sighed, and seemed much distempered, like one who wrestleth with himself. Then he cast about how he should begin, and to conclude he opened the matter thus. 'Sir, please you read that letter; it was writ by brother John unto my wife.'

The prior read it, but said never a word.

'Sir,' said the Knight, 'do you remember a sad time when you lay in Norwich gaol accused of murder, and cast for death?'

'I do remember it well, sir; and the uncharitable heart that

brought me to that pass.'

'Whilst you lay there, sir, something befell elsewhere, which I will hide no longer from you. The King being at his palace in London, a Knight who had fought by his side in France sought an audience in private; it was granted him at once; then the Knight fell on his knees to the King and begged that his life and lands might be spared, though he had slain a man in heat of blood. The King was grave but gentle, and then I showed him that letter, and owned the truth, that I and my servant, in our fury, had strangled that hapless monk.'

'Alas! sir, did you take my guilt upon yourself to save my life, so fully forfeit? 'Twas I who hated him, 'twas I who flung the stone.'

'At a dead body. I tell thee, man, we strangled him, and set his body up where you saw it; hand in his death you had none.'

The prior uttered a strange cry, and was silent. The Knight continued in a low voice.

'We set him in the yard; and when we found him in the porch, being half mad with terror and drink together, we bound him on the horse and launched him. All this I told the King, and he, considering the provocation, and pitying too much his old companion in arms, gave me my life and lands; and gave me thine, which indeed was but bare justice. So now, sir, you know that you are innocent of bloodshed, and 'tis I am guilty.'

The Knight looked at the churchman, and thought to see him break forth into thanksgivings. But it was not so. The prior

was deeply moved, but not exultant. 'Sir,' said he, like a man that is near choking, 'let me go to my cell and think over this strange tidings.'

'And pray for me, I do implore you,' said the Knight.

'Ay, sir, and with all my heart.'

Some days passed, and the Knight looked to hear his own tale come round again. But no; the prior was silent as the grave. Then after a while the Knight sent for him again, and said, 'Good father, what I told you was not under seal of confession.'

- 'I know it, sir,' said the prior. 'Yet will it go no further, unless I should outlive you by God's will. Alas! sir, you have taken from me that, which was the health of my soul, my belief that I had slain him I hated so unchristianlike. This belief it made humility easy to me, and even charity not difficult. What engine of wholesome mortification would be left me now, were I to go aprating that I slew not the brother I hated? Nay, I will never tell the truth, but carry my precious burden of humility all my days.'
- 'Oh, saint upon earth!' cried the knight. 'Outlive me, and then tell the truth.'

The monk replied not, but pondered these words.

And it fell out so that the Knight died three years after, and the prior closed his eyes, and said masses for his soul; and a good while afterwards he did, for the honour of the convent, reveal this true story to two young monks, but bound them by a solemn vow not to spread it during his life. After his death the truth got abroad, and amongst churchmen the prior was much revered, for that he had cured himself of an uncharitable heart, and had enforced on himself the penalty of unjust shame so many years.

# Juliet.

#### BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON.

## CHAPTER IV.

#### GEORGIE'S LOVER.

GEORGIE TRAVERS and the dogs were by this time at the kennels. Everybody thought a great deal of Miss Georgie there. The whip touched his greasy old fur cap to her, as he ran to open the gate for her with a grin of pleasure on his weather-stained old face; Ricketts, the huntsman, came forward respectfully to know what he could do for her, and called out her favourite hounds to be stroked and caressed; and then of course she must go into the stables. There were a few young horses always kept up at the kennels in addition to the usual staff required for the hunt, and amongst them was the mare that Cis had been told in vain to go and look at that morning.

'I came to have a look at that mare,' said Georgie; and the mare was trotted out for her to see.

Georgie stood aside and looked at her with the critical eye of a connoisseur.

She patted and stroked the animal; then stooped down and felt all her legs deliberately one after the other with her strong little hand in a scientific manner that made old Ricketts say afterwards to Tom the whip, that he had never seen her like for a woman; 'a real fust-rate un she be, to be sure, Tom!'

- 'I think I'll ride her this winter, Ricketts; she'd carry me well.'
- 'Like a bird, miss. She's a bit ticklish in her temper; but Lor' bless you, miss, there ain't nothing you can't ride.'
- 'Well, put a skirt on her this afternoon for a bit, and then you can bring her round to-morrow morning and I'll see how I like her.'

That was all the breaking-in for ladies' riding that Georgie's mounts ever had; the spice of risk and danger about riding a horse that had never carried a lady before, was just what she enjoyed.

She left the two men staring after her with looks of respect and admiration, and went her way down a neighbouring lane, deep cut between two high banks, still closely followed by the dogs.

She had not gone very far before a thudding sound of horse's hoofs in the field to the right of her was greeted by a sharp bark from the puppy. Presently a horse's head and forelegs appeared over the top of the hedge, and there dropped into the lane just in front of her a young gentleman on a grey pony.

In one moment he had dismounted and was eagerly coming towards her.

'Wattie!' she exclaimed.

'My little darling, how good of you to come!'

'I didn't come on purpose—really. I was at the kennels, and I thought—I thought——'

'Little story-teller! you thought you would come home this way on the chance of seeing me—eh, Georgie?' and Wattie Ellison proceeded to draw a very unresisting little woman close into his arms, and there to kiss her fondly on both cheeks, whilst Chanticleer, evidently suspecting mischief, pawed up against the back of his coat with very muddy feet, and a gruff bark of remonstrance.

Walter, or as he was commonly called Wattie, Ellison was a nephew of Sir George Ellison, whose property adjoined Sotherne on the further side. He generally resided with his uncle, having neither profession nor income of his own, and the baronet, who was rather fond of him, made him free to the use of his hunters and the shooting of his game. Otherwise Sir George could do nothing more for him; he was a poor man with a large family of his own, and his eldest son had already burdened himself with the cares of matrimony in the shape of an invalid wife and four little children. This second family all lived permanently in the paternal mansion, and Wattie, in common with several of the younger sons, had an attic in an upper and unfrequented region apportioned to him, which he was free to occupy whenever he chose; and, being an orphan with no other family ties and no means whatever at his disposal, Wattie did choose to occupy his attic very often, notably during most of the shooting and hunting seasons. He picked up an odd five-pound note now and then by selling a few water-colour sketches, for which he had a good deal of natural talent; but even at this poor make-believe of earning money he did not work hard enough to make anything of a livelihood. As long as his uncle's house, and table, and horses were free to him, he did not seem to have the energy or perseverance to work hard at that or anything else.

He was a general favourite with every one. Tall and good-looking, with merry grey eyes and curly brown hair, and the prettiest little moustache in the world, he was just the sort of young man to be spoilt by the whole female population. Women and children adored him. Nor was he any the less popular with the men. He rode so well, was such a crack shot, such good company in the billiard-room at night, and altogether such a manly young fellow in every way, that he was sure of a welcome in every house he went into. But, alas! he was hopelessly ineligible; and dowagers with marriageable daughters found themselves forced to turn a deaf ear to his fascinations.

He was nothing but a penniless ne'er-do-well, utterly without prospects. And yet what does this charming young scapegrace do but go and fall madly in love with the Squire's darling, precious Georgie! And, worse, Georgie falls in love with him.

Their love affair was as yet in its earliest stages. They had not dared to tell the Squire. They continued to meet half by stealth, half by accident, in their walks and rides, and in truth were so insanely happy in all the excitement and novelty of each other's affection, that they had scarcely had time to think of the future or to consider their situation with anything like serious attention. Woman-like, Georgie was the first to come out of this ecstatic fool's paradise. For the first time to-day she spoke to him seriously.

'Wattie, dear,' she said, as they went down the lane together, hand in hand, like a couple of children, whilst the pony and the dogs followed after them at their own sweet wills; 'Wattie, I am afraid papa will never hear of it.'

'Have you said anything to him, yet?'

- 'No, I have not dared. Poor papa, it would upset him so horribly. I felt the way once by saying something about you, but he got so angry I did not venture to go on.'
  - 'He hates me, I suppose,' said Wattie, with a rueful face.
- 'Nonsense! only you know, dear, you are not exactly a good match, are you?'
  - 'Not exactly;' and they both laughed.
- 'If you had a profession,' continued Georgie, 'even if you made nothing at it, it would sound better; and you see papa would like me to marry well. I am afraid he will stop it utterly.'
- 'And, if he does stop it utterly, what shall you do?' He stopped before her, holding her small face in both his hands, and forcing her to look up into his eyes.
- 'I shall obey him, Wattie.' Her voice was very low and gentle, but there was a decision and firmness in the little face that filled him with dismay.

'You would give me up!' cried Wattie.

'Not so, darling,' answered the girl. 'As long as I live I shall consider myself bound to you; I will never marry any one else. Perhaps, in time, he will relent and come round; but till he does I will never marry you. Don't hope it.' With all her tenderness and love he felt quite sure she meant what she said, and turned away from her with an impatient sigh. 'But, after all, why should we think of the worst?' said Georgie, slipping her arm confidingly under his.

'Why, indeed!' answered her lover, smiling. 'I daresay the old boy won't be quite such a stern hard-hearted parent as we fear. It will all come right in the end, Georgie, depend upon it!'

Wattie was of a hopeful disposition (very poor young men often are); nothing much worse could happen to him; he had nothing to lose, and it was quite on the cards that something better would turn up. But Georgie knew better. She knew what her father was, and she did not in the least think that things would come right in the end; not for a very long time, at least; not probably, she reflected sadly, till she was getting old and passée, and Wattie, perhaps, half tired of a long and well-nigh hopeless engagement.

But she did not trouble her lover with these sad forebodings. For his sake she would be hopeful too, and look at the bright side

of things as much as possible.

But as they walked on together they both by instinct avoided any further unpleasant consideration of what Mr. Travers would say to them.

There was nothing unusual in Georgie's walking about the lanes with young Ellison. He was so well known by everybody, and such an enfant de la maison in every family in the county, that he was always turning up at odd places and with different Moreover, he had been Georgie's recognised slave and worshipper for ever so many years. Mr. Travers himself, who had no objection to him in the light of an admirer, whatever he might have in the more serious phase of lover, had often and often deputed young Ellison to look after his daughter in a stiff run. He generally gave her her leads, opened gates for her, tightened her girths, or altered her stirrup if she required it, and often rode back with her at the end of a long day, when the hounds left off far from home. He had been constantly thrown in her way, and certainly the Squire had only himself to blame if these young people had fallen in love with each other.

He made the mistake of which so many parents are guilty. He allowed them to be constantly together under the most familiar circumstances, until they had fairly lost their hearts to each other

and it was too late; and then, as you will see, expected to be able to stop all intercourse between them and to be obeyed like an autocrat.

I am inclined to think the much abused Belgravian mother, who warns off younger sons from her flock as she would the small-pox or the scarlet fever, is the less culpable of the two. She, at all events, prevents the mischief, whereas parents who behave as did our friend the Squire, cause their children an amount of misery and suffering which they can scarcely, it is to be hoped, understand or be aware of; whilst by a little forethought and care it might all have been easily avoided.

It was arranged between Georgie and her lover before they parted that the dreaded communication was to be made by her to her father at the first seasonable opportunity.

'Not this week, I think,' said the girl; 'we are so busy just now. I must wait, I think, till the 1st is over, and then, if we have anything of a run, it will put him in a good temper, and I can tell him in the evening.'

'As you like, you wise little woman. By the way, what are you going to ride this winter?'

'The old chestnut, and I think that new mare papa bought last week; I have just been to see her.'

'What, that dark brown mare he bought down in Warwickshire? Don't ride her, Georgie. She's a nasty brute.'

'Why, what do you know of her? I like her looks myself, and papa bought her half on purpose for me.'

'Well, I heard a bad character of her down there; she's a run-away or something; she'll break your neck some day, Georgie.'

'Oh! I am not afraid; you won't get rid of me quite so easily as that. I shan't run far away from you, Wattie, and if I do I'm sure it will be a pleasure to you to run after me. And now I must say good-bye—indeed I must.'

'Little wretch! how quickly the time goes! I can't bear parting with you. I don't half like your having said you would throw me over if your father orders you to,' he added, as he bent over her, and kissed her tenderly.

'Ah! you don't know what papa and I are to each other; I couldn't break his heart, Wattie, and I never will.'

Poor child, poor little Georgie! There are some human vows that surely must be listened to with shouts of mocking laughter by the unseen world of spirits above and around us, if indeed, as it is said, they can read all our future lives as in a book.

Georgie Travers went home from that meeting with her lover

to find herself very late for luncheon, and her mother scolding at her in her peevish ill-tempered voice.

'Where have you been, Georgie? The mutton is quite cold.

What have you been doing all this time?'

'I've been at the kennels,' answered the girl, with that sort of half truth which is no lie in the eyes of most women. 'Never mind about the mutton, mamma. I'll have some ham. I am sorry I kept you waiting.'

'Always at those horrid kennels with the stable boys!' grum-

bled her mother; 'so unlady-like and unfeminine!'

'Let the girl alone!' growled the master of the house with his mouth full of suet pudding, flaring up, as he always did, in defence of his favourite child. 'I don't want her turned into a crybaby, like some of your children, Mrs. Travers; I wish her to go to the kennels. Did you see the mare, Georgie?'

'Yes, papa, I thought I'd ride her to-morrow. She isn't vicious, is she?' she asked, with a little hesitation in her voice.

'Vicious? Who has been putting such rubbish into your head? As quiet as a sheep. Little Flora might ride her—or Cis!' he added, with a cut at his son that was certainly rather cruel and uncalled for.

To everybody's surprise Cis got up with a very red face, and said,

'Well, then, I will ride her, sir, if you will let me.'

The Squire looked taken aback.

- 'Nonsense! You can't have her; she'd kick you off,' he said, rather confusedly.
  - 'Then she isn't safe for Georgie,' persisted Cis.
- 'Safe as a house for her; you can't ride,' said his father, gruffly. It must be confessed that he was a very trying sort of father to have.

Mrs. Travers said fretfully that she couldn't have dear Cis

dragged about on wild horses.

'Who wants to drag him, ma'am?' shouted the old man, fairly in a rage. 'He wouldn't be half such a ninny if it wasn't for you. Keep him at home and give him some pap!' and he pushed his plate away—having previously quite emptied it—and bounced out of the room in a fury, slamming the door behind him till the door-frame, already in a very rickety condition, shivered and threatened to come bodily out into the room.

Mrs. Travers whimpered, and Cis got up and kissed her, while the younger girls looked at each other with meaning glances and faint titters, awestruck yet delighted, as children generally are, in a row between their elders. Amy seized the opportunity of the general confusion to help herself largely to strawberry jam with her plum cake; whilst Flora slipped down under the table with a cold cutlet under her pinafore, with which she proceeded to feed old Chanticleer, much to that ancient hound's surprise and delight.

Meanwhile Georgie ate her ham in silence; with the pleasant consciousness of being the cause of the dispute, to sharpen her appetite.

Such scenes were of daily occurrence at Broadley House. Who does not know of such households—households where everybody is at sixes and sevens; where fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, are perpetually misunderstanding and mistaking each other's motives; where there are two factions, the father's and the mother's, and one child sides with one, and one with the other, and where little quarrellings and bickerings and divisions widen the breach slowly but surely day by day!

When Georgie swallowed down her lunch in a hurry and slipped away from the room, her mother made sure she had gone to her father to talk against herself and was proportionately aggrieved. Whereas Georgie had, in truth, gone up to her own little bed-room to think about her lover and to give herself up to delicious recollections of his words and his kisses.

Such a strange little maiden's bower it was! A long, low, half-furnished-looking room, only partially carpeted with strips of drugget, with a small camp beadstead at one end, and a chest of drawers and a washhand-stand at the other, and a rickety table and a few dilapidated wooden chairs about in the middle. Over the chimney-piece was a large-sized photograph, in an Oxford frame, of her father in full hunting gear, mounted on his favourite horse Sunbeam; flanked on either side by two smaller pictures, representing severally Ricketts the huntsman holding her own chestnut horse, and old Mike the earth-stopper hugging a favourite fox-terrier. Mike had grinned broadly at the critical moment when he shouldn't have grinned, and had come out with his mouth stretched from ear to ear and no nose at all to speak of; and the terrier, having incontinently wagged his tail, was permanently represented as owning two.

Above these specimens of art were nailed up a couple of horse-shoes, a miniature spur, supposed to fit on to Georgie's own small heel, and a large collection of riding-whips. On the wali, over the chest of drawers, was carefully nailed a piece of crimson silk on which were hung in a row five brushes, surmounted by a stuffed fox's head. These were Georgie's greatest treasures, being all, as she would tell you with pride, her own 'earnings' on those red-

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letter days of her life when she had been the only lady 'in at the death.'

Into this retreat Georgie came after the storm at lunch, hoping for a little peace which she was not long destined to enjoy. tap at the door, and enter Cis, full of troubles and misery, which, flinging himself down on the only sound chair in the room, he proceeded to pour forth.

Why was his father so hard on him? could he help his constitution? Why was he to be for ever sneered at and pitched into before every one? 'Only this morning, Georgie, he spoke almost

kindly-he wants me to marry Juliet.'

Well, and you want to marry Juliet yourself, don't you? said Georgie, who was well aware of her brother's passion. She had seated herself on the table, dangling her feet backwards and forwards in a manner that much endangered her stability on that ancient piece of furniture. 'It is easy enough to please papa in that, Cis-isn't it?'

But Juliet is so cold to me. You know I went to see her yesterday; she didn't seem one bit glad to see me; and she has a way of over-looking one, as if one was nobody. Do you know, all she found to say to me, after I had been there nearly ten minutes. was something about my whiskers!'

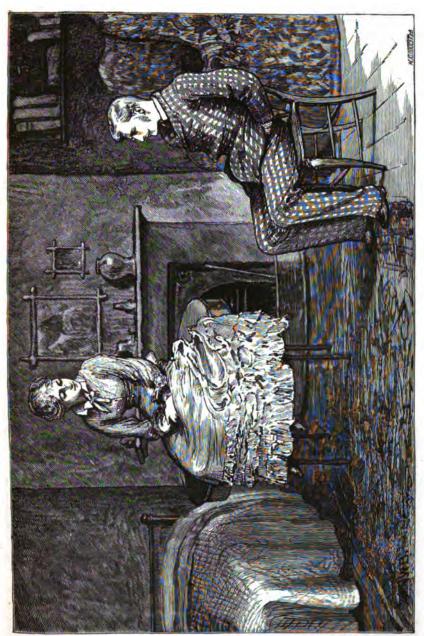
Georgie laughed merrily. 'She was clever to find anything to say of them. I shouldn't have thought them big enough to be worth mentioning! but then I'm your sister. Don't despair, Cis -don't be shy and timid with her; I am sure she is fond of you; and you know she has always been brought up to think of you as her lover. Her father wished it and your father wishes it. sure I think your path is a pretty easy one, with everybody to make it smooth, and to clear away difficulties for you-heigho!' poor Georgie gave a rueful sigh at the thought of her own very hopeless-looking little history.

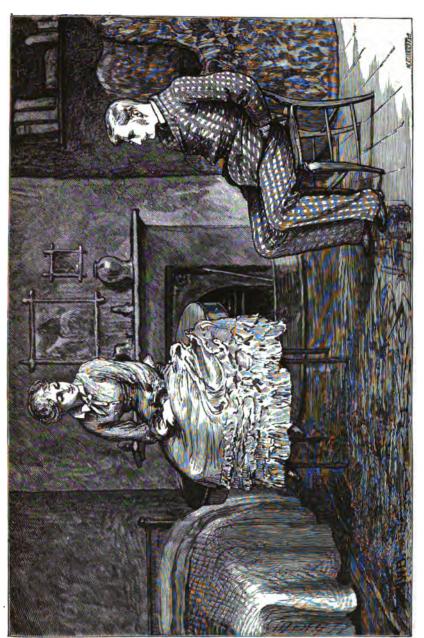
Cis, when he found any one to listen to him, could talk about Juliet by the hour; he straightway went off into a rhapsody about her—about her beauty, her talent, her singing, and her charms of every kind, which Georgie, although she admired and liked Juliet excessively, found after a time somewhat wearisome.

Where is the woman who can listen for long to the tale of the charms of another of her sex, without feeling bored?

When Cis came to offering to fetch his last poetical effusion in praise of his divinity in order that Georgie might fully enter into his feelings, she found she could stand it no longer, and laughingly pushed him out of the room by the shoulders.

'If you come to poetry, my reason will go, you love-sick swain.





You'd better not show me any poems, or I shall take them straight down to amuse papa!' at which awful threat Cis vanished, and it is needless to say did not return with any poetry.

## CHAPTER V.

#### JULIET MAKES A DISCOVERY.

The days at Sotherne Court slipped away swiftly and peacefully. Mr. Bruce had left; there was no longer any reason for his remaining; the business which had brought him down was concluded, and he had other work in town to attend to. But Colonel Fleming still lingered; the weather was fine and the shooting was good, and no one said a word about his leaving; he had nowhere else particularly to go, so he stopped on.

Mrs. Blair never came downstairs before luncheon time—there were, in truth, mysterious rites of the toilette to be gone through which took many hours' labour, and which probably accounted better for her late appearance than the shattered nerves which she pleaded as her excuse.

Juliet and her guardian got into the way of spending these long morning hours together. One day he had found her by herself, writing in the breakfast room.

- 'Why not bring all that into the library and keep me company, Juliet?'
- 'Shall I not be in your way?' she had asked, with a little hesitation.

'In my way? no, of course not! It is very unsociable of you to shut yourself up alone.'

After that she sat in the library every morning with him. They did not talk much. Colonel Fleming either read the papers or wrote his Indian letters, or else he made a pretence of looking over some of the Sotherne estate deeds, a perfectly unnecessary proceeding, of which he himself was half ashamed. Juliet, too, wrote her letters or did her house accounts, or touched up her water-colour drawings.

One sat at one end of the table and one at the other. Williams, the bailiff and land agent, came in on business, then the coachman and gamekeeper for orders, or Mrs. Pearce, the housekeeper, knocked at the door with a 'might she speak to Miss Blair for one minute?' so that it was by no means an uninterrupted tête-à-tête that our two friends enjoyed. Still of course there were some mornings when no one disturbed them for several hours, and there is no denying that they found these mornings particularly delightful.

In the afternoons everything was altered. Mrs. Blair was downstairs; Cecil Travers dropped in to lunch two days out of three, Colonel Fleming went out shooting, and Juliet drove or rode or walked, or stayed at home and received visitors, as she had always been accustomed to do before her guardian's arrival.

'That young Travers comes here very often!' remarked Colonel Fleming, one morning, breaking a long silence in which nothing had been audible but the scratch-scratching of two pens hard at

work.

'Yes, he comes often,' answered Juliet, with a smile, not looking up from her writing.

'He seems rather a muff,' continued Colonel Fleming, dispar-

agingly.

- 'Oh, not at all; you are quite mistaken!' she said, eagerly. 'He is very delicate, poor boy, but he is really clever; he did so well at college, and he reads a great deal, and is very well informed; but he is not at all appreciated in his home, poor Cis, because Mr. Travers thinks nothing of any one who can't ride well, and it's so unfortunate for Cis that he is so timid constitutionally. He really cannot manage a horse in the least; and if he went at a fence I believe he would tumble off. He is very painfully conscious of it himself, poor fellow. I always feel sorry for him, because he is so snubbed at home.'
- 'At all events he is appreciated here,' said Hugh, who had listened to her eager defence with a meaning smile.

Juliet blushed a little. No woman likes her suitor, be his

suit ever so little favoured by herself, to be called a muff.

- 'You are fond of him, Juliet?' continued her guardian, with his head thrown back in his chair, and looking at her mischievously through half-closed eyes: he could read her thoughts as if she had spoken them.
- 'I have known him all my life,' answered Juliet, evasively. 'I am used to him—why do you ask me?'
  - 'Never mind why; the subject has an interest for me.'

She raised her eyes for one moment and met his. Ah, what a volume is sometimes written in one look!

It was but the work of a second, and then Colonel Fleming mercifully and humanely put up the 'Times' between himself and his ward that he might not see the glowing face of the girl as she bent it quickly down over her writing.

How her heart was beating! surely he would hear it, she thought in dismay; for in that one moment Juliet Blair had learnt her own secret!

Half with terror, half with a delicious joy, she had discovered

that her heart was gone! I suppose no woman makes that discovery for the first time, without a spasm of absolute fear. Where will it lead her to, this new all-absorbing tyrant that has invaded her existence—what will be the end of it?

Juliet ordered her horse and took a long solitary ride that afternoon, that she might think it all out and fairly realise this new thing that had come to her.

To a woman of weaker feelings and narrower mind, to be loved is generally more important than to love. Flattered vanity, gratified self-esteem, the natural pleasure that every woman has in taking the upper hand of the other sex, all these mingled feelings come in and help to make up what most women honestly believe to be love. In nine out of ten so-called love matches, the love is all on the man's side, and the pleasure of being loved only on the woman's.

For Juliet Blair this was not so; she loved the man of herself, not because he loved her; indeed she did not know, and hardly troubled herself to think in those first moments, whether he did love her at all. With all the depth and intensity of a nature that was at once passionate and devoted, impulsive and steadfast, she felt that she had learnt to love this man with the whole strength of her being. All her life long others had worshipped and adored her; she had been queen and they her slaves; but this man was her master; without him her life had been an incomplete thing. With him her whole existence took a new meaning. Henceforth there was but one man on earth for her; one who could stir her pulses or dominate her life, whose voice could thrill through her heart, or whose presence could fill her soul with a joy that those alone who have loved with a passion can understand.

And the man was Hugh Fleming. Not Cecil, the gentle, sensitive, affectionate boy who had adored her for years, who was her equal in years and position, whom all her friends had wished her to love and whom her dead father had chosen for her husband; not him, but the man who but a month ago had been utterly unknown to her, whose years doubled her own, whose life was half spent and whose youth was over; the man who was to have been her guardian and her adviser, who was to have guided her in her choice of a husband, and to have stood in her father's place at the wedding, and whom certainly that father had never for one moment contemplated in the light of her possible lover!

There was no shame in her heart that she had given her love unasked. It did not in those first moments trouble her whether or not it was likely to be returned. She was proud of it, proud of herself for loving him; for was he not worthy to be loved; was

he not everything that a woman could most desire to possess? Strong in mind and body, was he not a man to whom she could turn instinctively for help and support; whose judgment must be unerring, whose word must be her law?

But by-and-by, as she rode slowly down a narrow lane, flicking the dying hedgerows idly with her whip, other thoughts began to stir her heart—there came to her a recollection of that 'past' in his life to which he had more than once alluded. Some love, as she had guessed, had once filled his life and was dead and gone, leaving behind a void and a blank in his heart; could that void never be filled up? had that past love been so powerful and intense, even such as she felt now in herself, that it could never be renewed? Would Hugh Fleming never love again? Who is it who talks about first love? is it true that a man who has once loved can never love again, in the same manner?

And at these questions that she asked herself, the flush of excitement faded slowly from Juliet's cheek, and her face grew weary and sad.

All at once the landscape looked grey and dreary, the sunshine seemed to have faded, the trees with their falling leaves looked gaunt and cheerless; for the first time, she noticed the white mist creeping up from the valley towards her. With a little shiver she turned her horse's head quickly and rode homewards.

In the hall at Sotherne, Cis Travers came eagerly forward to meet her.

'Oh, here you are! I have been waiting for you. How long you have been out, Juliet; how white you are! You should not ride so far; you look tired out,' he said, following her with eager solicitude towards the staircase.

'Let me alone,' said Juliet, crossly; 'don't you suppose that I am old enough to take care of myself!'

An impulsive nature has always its weaknesses; Juliet at that moment felt a positive dislike to the boy and his tender anxiety. The young fellow drew back abashed and repulsed by her fretful words.

Eventually she repented of her unkindness to him and asked him to stay to dinner, an invitation which Cis eagerly availed himself of.

Nothing had occurred that need have altered her manner to her guardian, and yet she felt, when they met in the evening, that she could not speak naturally to him; she was thankful for the presence of Cis Travers, and addressed herself almost exclusively to him all dinner time. She talked more than was usual to her, asking him numberless questions about himself and his interests,

and reviving all sorts of half playful, half affectionate reminiscences concerning little incidents of their childish days. Cis had never seen her so gracious and so encouraging to him. His spirits rose, he became excited and animated, till Juliet, who had never before taken such pains to draw him out, was surprised to find how pleasantly he could talk.

Colonel Fleming could not quite make her out; he thought he was being punished for having called Cis a muff, and revenged himself by being particularly agreeable to Mrs. Blair.

That lady was not slow to appreciate his attentions. She always laid herself out to fascinate him, but seldom met with such success as on this evening.

'It is all this scarf à la Pompadour, with the marquise cap,' she said to herself; 'I knew it suited me to perfection, in spite of that little fool Ernestine.' Ernestine was Mrs. Blair's French maid.

Whereas, Colonel Fleming could hardly have told you at the end of the evening whether his fair charmer wore black or white, velvet or brown holland!

She was full of mysterious nods and winks, and little jerks of the head in the direction of the two young people.

'How well they get on!' she whispered behind her fan; 'it will be all settled in a few days, you will see—don't they look happy together!'

'Let me give you a little more chicken!' said Colonel Fleming, ignoring entirely, with a brutal indifference, the happiness of the

young couple.

'Not any, thanks. Aha! always so hard-hearted to a love affair, you naughty, cruel man!' laughed the widow, softly. 'Ah! If I could only give you a little of my exquisite sympathy in matters of the heart—I who have too much sensitiveness. My beloved husband used always to blame me for it. "My darling Maria," he used frequently to say to me, "try and control yourself; you wear yourself out with so much sensibility:" and that is my defect. I am quite conscious of it,' she added, with a pretty sorrowful little sigh.

'Sense and sensibility,' said Hugh, gallantly, with a touch of

unperceived sarcasm; 'they generally go together!'

'Flatterer!' answered the lady, tapping his hand gently with her ever ready fan. At which Juliet stopped short in the middle of what she was saying and stared at her, and then got very red and went on talking again.

Everybody was at odds that evening.

It is to be hoped that Mrs. Blair and Cis enjoyed themselves, for certainly the other two did not.

But after a night spent in sleeplessly tossing up and down upon her bed, in self-torturings and self-scoldings, Juliet rose in the morning in a more reasonable frame of mind.

It was a hopelessly wet day, wet and windy, with the leaves coming down off the trees in showers; a day that made Squire Travers rub his hands gleefully together as he drew aside his blind and looked out of the window. 'That's the sort; soon bring the leaves all off the hedges at this rate!' he muttered hopefully to himself.

But Miss Blair, who was not so keen about hunting as her neighbour, and loved each season's pleasures in their turn, was sorry to see the last of her roses and scarlet geraniums lying all dashed and draggled on the sopping lawn. The whole valley was filled with a misty drizzle, and the west wind howled in a melancholy way among the tall chimneys of the old house.

Juliet met her guardian at breakfast with pitiful bemoanings over this dismal change in the weather. Let us be thankful that we are born under showery skies and changing winds, and that Providence has bestowed upon us a gift so appropriate to our needs as an ever varying climate! Let us be thankful, we that are blessed with neither the ease of manner nor the fluent tongue of our French neighbours,—that are, on the contrary, awkward, silent, and self-conscious under trying circumstances,—let us be thankful, I say, for the ever ready subject of conversation which has been mercifully meted out to us to compensate in some measure for these defects.

Oh, much abused, much belied climate of the British Isles, damp, rheumatic, neuralgic, unwholesome though you be—we owe you at least this, that you cover our mistakes, veil our confusions, screen our awkwardnesses, and provide for us, one and all, an easy and convenient channel whereby we may escape unscathed in the emotional moments of our lives!

Juliet was very thankful to the driving rain and lowering skies that day at breakfast. The morning papers did the rest, and took away from the awkwardness of a *tête-à-tête* which she had never found oppressive before.

And yet—when she had gone about her household duties, and scolded the cook, and consulted with the housekeeper, and made sundry insinuating suggestions to old Higgs the butler, who always called her 'Miss Juliet,' and treated her with a fatherly patronage as if the cellar was his personal property, out of which in consideration for her sex and general weakness he kindly allowed her to have a few bottles of wine—and yet, after these ordinary daily duties were completed, Juliet, with that perversity which is essen-

tially a feminine peculiarity, went of her own accord into the library.

She was unreasonably disappointed and mortified to find the room empty, and sat down to her writing in the most aggrieved frame of mind. After a few minutes, however, Colonel Fleming came in; he had a large portfolio under his arm, which he proceeded to deposit in front of her. 'I promised to show you my sketches some day, Juliet; as it is a wet morning, suppose we look over them now.'

The girl was delighted, and soon got over her nervous self-consciousness in the pleasure of turning over the drawings and listening to his animated descriptions of the scenes and subjects they represented.

There were Indian temples and palaces, views on the Ganges, views of the Himalayas, spirited little subjects descriptive of pigsticking and tiger hunts, all set in a gorgeous flare of Eastern colouring; side by side with tamer bits of woodland or sea coast, or dreamy distant views over English hedgerows and under English skies.

Juliet was enchanted with all she saw; she had an artistic eye herself, and keenly appreciated the bold hand and correct colouring displayed in the sketches in Hugh Fleming's portfolio, indicating, as they did, no mean capacity for art.

She had looked them carefully all through, and was standing at the table replacing the drawings into the book, when there fluttered out from among them a small coloured crayon sketch which she had not noticed before, and which fell at her feet under the table.

Juliet stooped to pick it up. It was the head of a woman, a young girl, apparently about seventeen, fair and delicate looking, with flaxen hair falling in curls on either side of her face in an old-fashioned way, and with large blue eyes and a gentle timid-looking mouth. Underneath the sketch, in Hugh's bold large handwriting, which Juliet had no difficulty in recognising, was written June 16, 1849.—My darling Annie.'

With an exclamation, Colonel Fleming attempted to take the little sketch from her hand. Juliet turned upon him speechless, but with crimson cheeks and blazing eyes, and in another instant the pale tinted face was torn right across, and the two pieces fell fluttering on to the ground between them.

It was all the work of one minute, and in the next, Juliet, in an agony of shame and contrition, had burst into a passion of angry tears. Hugh Fleming turned first very white and then very red. He stooped down and picked up the damaged sketch.

'How could you be so careless, Juliet!' he said, trying to steady his voice, which trembled with some suppressed emotion; 'how stupid of you to tear this little old sketch! I did not know I had it still: don't cry, my dear child, it doesn't much signify: of course it was an accident—every one has accidents occasionally. I am sure you will put the pieces together as well as you can for me, won't you?' and he thrust the drawing into her hand.

'Mr. Travers wishes to speak to you in the morning room, please, Miss,' here broke in Higgs the butler, opening the door.

Juliet jumped up, hastily brushed away her tears, and, murmuring something indistinct about being sorry for her stupidity, she hurriedly left the room, carrying away the torn fragments of the crayon sketch in her hand.

# CHAPTER VI.

### BRNESTINE LOOKS FOR A FAN.

CECIL TRAVERS was kept waiting fully a quarter of an hour for Miss Blair in the morning room. Emboldened by her manner to him on the previous evening, the unlucky youth had decided on coming over the first thing in the morning, to place his fate once more in her hands.

He could not, as it happens, have chosen a more inopportune moment.

Juliet came into the room with a thunder cloud on her face. My heroine was not, as it will be noticed, blessed with an angelic temper.

'What is it you want, Cis?' she said as she entered the room; and certainly no more unpromising foundation whereupon to construct a declaration of love was ever presented to an unfortunate young man.

'I came—I came—oh, Juliet!' taking hold of both her hands; 'you know very well what I have come for. You were so good to me last night, and so kind and nice that I thought—I thought—'

'You thought you would make an idiot of yourself once more; is that it, Cis?'

'Oh, Juliet, I do so love you! Don't you think you could like me a little? don't you think you are fonder of me than you used to be?'

'My dear Cis, I thought we had talked all this over before,' said Juliet, sitting down and resigning herself to her fate. 'I have told you over and over again that, though I am fond of you as an old friend, you really must not expect anything more from me. Why don't you try and put the idea out of your head?'

The boy stood silent before her with a downcast face and the tears slowly welling up into his blue eyes.

'Come, come, Cis,' said Juliet, touched by the sight of his sorrow and putting out her hand kindly towards him. 'Come, be a man; look at it in its proper light. I don't love you in that way, Cis, and I never shall, never! We should not be in the least suited to each other. Though you are two years older than I am, yet I am years older in life than you. You would go your way and I mine. We should never be happy together. And, besides, I don't love you as your wife should love you. Cis, my poor old boy, don't look so unhappy; there are plenty more women in the world, far better than I am, who will be fond of you some day.'

'Oh, don't talk to me of other women, I can't bear it!' groaned Cis, turning away from her to hide his face of misery. 'Don't take away hope, Juliet; tell me to wait. I have been too quick again, I haven't given you time enough. I will go away again and wait—years—any time you like; only, for God's sake, don't say you won't let me come here and see you as usual!'

'Of course, Cis, come here as usual—why, after knowing you all my life, how could I say otherwise! But indeed, indeed, I don't think I must let you hope anything else. I will be your friend all my life, Cis, but don't ask me for anything more.'

Poor Cis was fairly sobbing; he leant his head down on the table and gave free vent to his misery, whilst Juliet, with those half measures that women so selfishly delight in, thought to console him by standing over him, stroking his hands, and pushing back his fair hair from his forehead; she even stooped down and gave him a gentle kiss, murmuring the most affectionate and tender words into his ear—proceedings which filled the unhappy Cis with a mixture of ecstasy and wretchedness that sent him almost beside himself.

When, however, wound up to a pitch of absolute despair by her kindness, Cis went down on his knees before her, clung to her hands with passionate kisses, and entreated her to relent and promise to marry him, Juliet, after the manner of her capricious sex, drew back, spoke to him shortly and sternly, told him to get up and not make a fool of himself, and used other such wholesome but unpalatable words as quickly brought the young gentleman to his senses.

'It is time you went, Cis; I don't want a scene, and I can say nothing more to you; take my advice—go away from home for a little while, and then, when you are more sensible and can look at things in a brighter light, come back and see me again.'

'Yes, I will do everything you think best; I will go away, and

I won't bother you again—at least not yet; but I shall love you all my life, Juliet. I don't think I am such a boy as you think; at all events it is no boy's love that I feel. I shall never marry any one else but you, and if you won't have me for a husband I will stand by you as your friend and your brother till I die!' So very crestfallen, but not altogether ingloriously, Cis Travers took his departure.

'Wasn't Cis Travers here this morning?' asked Mrs. Blair of her stepdaughter as they sat together over their fancy work that

afternoon.

'Yes, he was,' answered Juliet, rather shortly.

'I hope you haven't refused him again, Juliet,' said the widow, enquiringly, looking closely at her.

enquiringly, looking closely at her.

'What if I had! I don't know that I need confide Cis's love affairs to any one, Mrs. Blair,' said the girl resentfully, for to bully her about Cis was one of Mrs. Blair's favourite amusements.

'Juliet, I hope you haven't sent that poor young man quite

away; I hope you have given him a little encouragement.'

'What does it matter?' said Juliet, jumping up and scattering her fancy work on to the carpet. 'When I am engaged to be married, I will let you know at once, Mrs. Blair, you may be quite sure of that!' This was added defiantly, with distinct allusion to the fact, which was tacitly understood between them, that, when she married, Mrs. Blair would probably have to seek other quarters.

Juliet gathered up her tumbled worsteds and silks and left the room with a little short laugh which, had she seen the malignant glance which her stepmother cast after her, would probably have been less triumphant.

Mademoiselle Ernestine, Mrs. Blair's French maid, was a young woman of varied accomplishments and great discretion of character.

Not only was she a consummate artiste in all the intricacies of dress and fashion, in all the mysterious and varied methods of adorning the hair, and in still more mysterious processes of beautifying the human countenance, into which it does not become you and me, oh, my reader, to pry too closely! but also was this young person an astute observer of life and character. She knew when to speak and what to say, and she knew also,—oh, rare and wonderful talent in a woman!—she knew when to hold her tongue.

That same evening, whilst Ernestine was brushing out those mysterious plaits and bows of Mrs. Blair's fair hair, of which no mortal being save those two could entirely guess the wondrous construction, the lady observed carelessly:

'Miss Blair cannot go much out into the garden in the morning this weather, can she, Ernestine?'

- 'Oh no, madame! What a privation for Mademoiselle! she so fond of the flowers!'
- 'And it must be dull for her in the morning room all by herself, mustn't it?' continued the widow.
- 'Ah, oui, madame, cette pauvre chère demoiselle! it must be triste à faire peur; it is certainly no wonder that Mademoiselle should refugiate herself in the librairie with Monsieur le Colonel who is so silent and quiet, not a companion so cheerful as a lady would be for her, pauvre demoiselle!'
- 'Thanks, that will do for to-night, Ernestine; bring me my slippers and my book of Meditations. I don't want you any more. Good night'—and the waiting maid was dismissed.

The next morning, when Ernestine brought in her mistress's cup of chocolate, the lady said to her as she drew aside the bed curtain and placed the dainty little china tray beside her:

'Go down into the library, Ernestine, and look for my fan; I think I left it there last night.'

The fan lay conspicuously on the dressing table; but Ernestine, who could be dumb or deaf or blind as occasion demanded, answered demurely:

'Oui, madame;' and departed.

In the course of five minutes she returned.

'I cannot find it anywhere, madame, and ah, tiens, there it is! Dieu, que je suis bête! and I who searched everywhere under all the tables, and monsieur himself was so good as to help me to look; but mademoiselle said she felt sure you had taken it upstairs with you.' Having thus imparted the information which she knew was required, Mademoiselle Ernestine busied herself about the room.

'Ernestine,' said Mrs. Blair, after a few minutes, 'I feel so fresh and well this morning, I think if you will bring me my bath I will get up at once; it is a nice morning, isn't it?'

It was a gusty, showery day, hardly finer than its predecessor; but Ernestine replied with alacrity that it was 'adorablement beau;' and Mrs. Blair proceeded to get up.

Downstairs, Juliet was standing timidly at the back of Colonel Fleming's chair holding in her hand the torn sketch very carefully pasted on to a piece of cardboard, so that the rent was almost invisible. 'I—I have mended it as well as I could,' she was saying with a crimson face and a trembling voice.

Colonel Fleming waited for half a minute before laying down his pen and turning towards her, possibly in order to give her time to control herself.

'You have mended what? Oh, ah, the little sketch!' he said, not looking up at her; 'that is very kind of you; there was no

hurry about it. It is a pretty face, is it not? Would you like me to tell you the story of that poor girl, Juliet? I think you would be sorry for her; sit down here, wheeling an arm-chair in front of the fire for her; 'there, are you comfortable? let me give you a footstool: and now I will tell you about her.' Juliet sat as she was told and looked away from him into the fire.

'Every one, I suppose, has some romance, either sad or sweet, in their past lives, and Annie Chalmers is mine,' he began, not looking

at her, whilst Juliet's heart beat fast and painfully.

'It was years and years ago, almost before you were born, that I first met her. She was the sweetest, gentlest, most innocent little soul that God ever created. She lived alone with her father in a tiny house just on the outskirts of a great deep wood. I was in the -th then, and we were quartered in the neighbouring dead-alive little Cathedral town. Perhaps at first it was only for want of something better to do, but at all events I got into the habit of walking out to their cottage on summer evenings. I used to stroll over there in the dusk, and her father and I would sit outside in the garden smoking our pipes by the open window, and she used to sit inside in the darkness singing to us all sorts of quaint old-fashioned songs in her sweet pure voice; and then, when I went away she would walk out to the end of the garden with me and stand and talk to me at the gate before I left. One night we were standing there together under the honeysuckle archway; there were all sorts of sweet smells in the air from the midsummer flowers about us, and the moonshine was gleaming white and still over the lawn, and through the dark trunks of the trees in the wood beyond; presently, I recollect, a soft white owlet flew by us with a little cry that made her start and cling to my hand. It was all so silent that we could hear the brook tinkling over the stones at the bottom of the field; and we ourselves ceased talking, to listen to the still voices of the night; and then I don't know how it all came about, or why I did it, but suddenly I took my darling into my arms all in the silver midsummer's moonlight and told her that I loved her, and found out from the fluttering of her heart that she too loved me.

'Well, it was of course the most foolish and imprudent engagement that two young things ever entered into. I had nothing but my pay in those days, and she was absolutely penniless. Her father stormed and swore at me a bit at first; but after a day or two, when Annie had hung on his neck and wept and prayed and entreated, he had no longer the heart to refuse her anything. He found out, heaven knows by what pinching and saving and selling out of his slender capital, that he could give her a thousand pounds,

and for the rest we must live on my pay, and trust, as so many do, to luck or chance, to rub along through life as best we could.

'Annie, dear little soul, had no fears. What were butchers' and bakers' bills to her! Such sordid vulgar cares never troubled her; her home had been certainly a modest one, but still she had never been brought face to face with dunning tradesmen or pinch-She had beautiful high-flown poetical ideas about the delight of starving with me on a crust of bread, and giving up everything else on earth for love—words of which, poor child, she had not in fact the faintest comprehension; she used to trip along by my side with her hands twisted over my arm, solemnly going over in one moment all she would do and bear and suffer for my sake, in a way that when I gazed down at her little fragile figure, that looked as if the first rough wind must blow her away, made my heart sink with dismay; and then in the next moment she would be prattling like a child of the home we should have together, all filled with fresh flowers and bright-coloured chintzes and pink and white muslin, till I could not help smiling at her simplicity and utter ignorance of the harsh unlovely world I was going to take her into.'

It will surprise no one to learn that at this juncture Miss Blair mentally ejaculated, 'Little fool!'

'Well,' continued Hugh Fleming, after a moment's pause, 'well, after we had been engaged about six weeks, orders came for my regiment to go to India. That was a dreadful blow for the old man; if he had known it at the first, I doubt if he would ever have consented to our engagement; but it was too late now. Annie said her heart would break if she was not allowed to go out with me; her father could not help himself, he was obliged to hide his own suffering and to let her go.

'Of course the result of the change in my prospects was that we must be married at once. We had to start in a month, and there was barely time to get ready her outfit and to make all arrangements for our wedding, so as to allow us a clear week in England before embarking at Southampton.

'Privately, Annie and I thought the Horse Guards had played into our hands in the most delightful and exemplary manner in the world! Instead of being doomed to the tedium of a long and uncertain engagement, here were we forced, as it were, into immediate matrimony by circumstances over which we had no control whatever. We were careful, however, not to hurt the old man's feelings by any unseemly display of this very selfish glee.

'I can hardly remember all that happened during those last three weeks. I know we were both very busy; she went up to

London for two days to stay with an aunt who was to help her to get her things, and I, too, was obliged to run up to town two or three times. What with extra regimental duties consequent on such a sudden start, looking after the men's outfits and my own, and what with having to go, again and again, to the lawyers to see about the settlement of her thousand pounds,—and lawyers can take as much time over one thousand pounds as they can over sixty,—you may fancy that I had plenty of business on my hands, and had not much spare time left for anything. In truth, I saw very little of Annie just then—a fact which has since caused me endless and most painful self-reproaches.

'I was continually thinking that as I was so soon to have her all to myself it did not so much matter that so many days slipped by without my seeing her at all. Alas! if I had but known!

'At last everything was settled, and Jim Lester, our Major, was to be my best man. He is dead now, poor fellow; he was killed at Lucknow. Such a tall handsome man he was-he always did best man to all the young fellows in the regiment who made fools of themselves, as he would say, and then stood godfather to their first babies. He was so accustomed to it, he used to say, that he could do either office in his sleep; his only fear being that he might some day forget at which ceremony he was assisting and interpolate sponsorial answers into the solemnisation of Holy Matrimony. Indeed, there was a story currently reported and universally believed in, that being best man on one occasion to a certain Captain Gordon, who was fortunate enough to win the hand of a very pretty heiress much run after by all the unmarried officers in the —th, the parson having duly asked "Wilt thou take this woman to be thy wedded wife, etc.," Jim Lester in a loud and fervent voice, audible all over the church, made response, "That is my desire," which so took away the bridegroom's breath that he was completely placed hors de combat, and never answered "I will" at all, so that the clergyman had to proceed rapidly to the next paragraph in the service in order to cover his hopeless confusion, whilst Jim Lester never found out that he had done anything wrong until the time came for kissing the bridesmaids in the vestry.

'Well, the day before the wedding day came, and I went over to the cottage. The peaceful house seemed strange and unlike itself. There was the aunt from London, and two cousins who were to be her bridesmaids, and a clergyman uncle who was to marry us. We had a scramble picnic tea party in Mr. Chalmers's little smoking room, as the dining room, I was told, was laid out for the next day's feast. We were all very merry, but my Annie looked a little pale and worried.

- When I rose to go, she followed me out of the room.
- "Look here," she said, and turned the key of the dining-room door and made me go in. "Isn't it pretty? I have arranged it all myself; it only wants a few more flowers round the cake to be perfect."
- 'There was the table all laid out with snowy linen and bright glass, and piles of fruit and pastry in silver dishes, and in the middle the white sugared bridal cake, and over all a perfect flower garden of roses and fuchsias, and great white Ascension lilies in scented pyramids.
  - "Isn't it lovely? and I have arranged all the flowers myself."
- "You have tired yourself out, I am afraid, little woman," I said, drawing her near to me.
  - "But isn't it pretty, Hugh?" she asked again.
- 'And then I praised her handiwork with heaven knows how many foolishly fond lover's words.
  - "I must go now," I said.
- "Then say good-bye, Hugh," she answered, putting up her arms round my neck.
  - "Good-night," I answered.
  - "Not good-night! say good-bye," she persisted.
- "Why good-bye, Annie? surely good night is a more fitting word between us now."
- "But I should like you to say good-bye, best; it is good-bye to Annie Chalmers, you know."
- 'I have often wondered what made her say this; whether it was a mere chance whim, or whether, indeed, there was some presentiment in her mind of what the morrow was to bring forth. At the time I thought nothing of it; I smiled at her fanciful request, and granted it playfully; and then she came down the garden with me, and stood in the honeysuckle archway after I parted from her, as she had been always accustomed to do. When I reached the corner of the wood I turned to wave my hand to her; there she stood, a slight white motionless figure looking after me in the dusky twilight. I never saw her again alive; never, never.
- 'Early the next morning, half an hour even before the very early hour at which I had ordered my servant to call me, I was awakened by a clattering of horse's hoofs on the stones of the barrack yard outside my window. I don't know why, but there seemed something ominous to me in the sound; there was nothing very unusual in it, and yet somehow I connected it immediately with myself. Five minutes after, Jim Lester came into my room with a face as scared and white as if he had seen a ghost.
  - "Something is wrong, Fleming; you must get up at once, and vol. xxix. No. CXVI.

we must go over to the cottage. I have ordered my dog-cart; be as quick as you can-and," he added, as he turned away again to the door, "put on your shooting-jacket, old fellow," and by that I knew that there would be no wedding for me that day!

'Dear old Jim Lester! who that had known you could say that there are not men in the world as pitiful, as tender-hearted, as full of exquisite tact and perfect sympathy and heaven-born compassion as any woman that ever lived!

'During that two miles' drive to the cottage in Jim's dogcart, we neither of us spoke one single word. I did not dare ask what had happened, or whether he knew. An awful certainty of the truth was upon me, and yet I kept on saying over and over again to myself:

"Of course, it's old Chalmers has had a stroke; of course it's

the old man; old men always have strokes and fits."

Once I think I said it aloud, and then Jim just laid his hand lightly on mine for a minute, as a woman might have done, but he never spoke.

But when I got there, there was no longer any need for me to ask. A frightened group of women stood in the narrow hall. When I came in at the doorway they made way for me to pass in silence, and I walked straight upstairs.

'On the little landing above, a door opened, and some one said, "Here he is."

'And then old Chalmers said, "Oh, my poor boy!" and took my hand and led me into the room.

'Her room! On a chair was huddled up her wedding finery, her white dress and her veil, and the orange blossoms; the bouquet I had had sent her from Covent Garden the day before, lay on the dressing-table. I think I saw them all in that one moment, down to her gloves knocked off the table and lying on the floor beside her little satin slippers. And she-my bride, my darling-lay there on the still warm and ruffled bed, which she had apparently but just left, dead-quite dead!

'It was the doctor behind me who spoke. "It is heart disease; nothing could have saved her; it must have been the fatigue and excitement that killed her. She could not have suffered at all; we must be thankful for that."

" Why was I not sent for?" I said, hoarsely.

"There was no time," said the father; "she was dressing, and felt a little faint; she called her cousin from the next room, and she was so frightened at the look in her face that she called her mother. They had hardly time to fetch me—as I came into the room she died."

'And then I don't know what happened. I think I fell forward on to the bed with an exceeding bitter cry, and everything became darkness around me. Then like a voice out of a fog some one said, "Take him away, he should not be here, poor fellow! take him out of the room."

'And it was the aunt, I think, who led me downstairs by the

hand, I groping my way down like a blind man.

"Not there, not there, anywhere but there!" I cried, as the poor woman, hardly conscious probably of what she was doing, opened the dining-room door.

'For there I saw again the white table all laid out with the fruits and the bridal cake, and the roses and the white Ascension lilies, and seemed to hear again my darling's voice, "Isn't it pretty, Hugh? say good-bye to me, not good-night; say good-bye," as she had said it only last night.

'Ah, God, that was an awful day! to this hour I shudder when I think of it.

'There is not much more to tell you, Juliet. A few days later, and I was standing by her open grave in the little churchyard, through which I had thought she would have passed by my side in all her bridal finery.

'It killed her father; he only survived about a year. I heard afterwards that her mother had died suddenly in the same way; so I suppose she had inherited a weak heart from her. I went out to India the following week alone; and except to Jim Lester, from that day to this, Juliet, you are the first person to whom the name of Annie Chalmers has passed my lips.'

Colonel Fleming ceased speaking, and for a few minutes there was silence in the room; only the clock ticked on between them, and a blazing coal fell noisily out of the grate into the fender.

Then he got up and came and stood over her: 'I have told you my story, Juliet; you see it is all past and gone by, a great many years ago; my life is perhaps over, and yours is only just beginning—now tell me something; why did you so ruthlessly tear that poor little face in half yesterday?'

'You—you said it was an accident; besides, I did not know,' stammered Juliet, crimsoning painfully.

'That is no answer, Juliet—why did you do it?'

He bent down over her and took hold of both her hands, and the lids dropped over her conscious eyes that could not look up to meet his.

'I will know; why did you do it? child, tell me!' and there was a tremor of unspoken passion in his voice. 'Tell me, darling—why did you?'

'Ah, good morning, good people!' He dropped Juliet's hands as if they burnt him, and they both started apart guiltily as Mrs. Blair, all radiant in grey cashmere and pink silk, with a white Shetland shawl becomingly draped over her shoulders, sailed into the room.

'Good morning, Colonel; now, where can that black and gold fan of mine be! Ernestine is as blind as a bat, and never can find anything, and I know I must have left it here last night; Juliet, love, is it not on that table near you?—no? then where can it be! Ah, here is that silly Ernestine!' and enter that damsel demurely carrying the fan.

'Here is the fan, madame; I have found him on your table of toilette under the sachet.'

How both these consummate actresses managed to keep their countenances to each other during this playing out of their little parts was certainly almost miraculous!

(To be continued.

# Old Maids.

#### BY E. LYNN LINTON.

FROM time immemorial every petty satirist has had his fling atold maids, and every shallow-minded wife and mother has added her little budget of contempt for those of her sisters who have not found, perhaps who have not desired to find, the right man with whom to share their lives. Nothing but religious consecration has sanctified the celibacy of women in the eyes of a world which is not celibate; and the theory that some among them actually prefer to remain unmarried, even when not bound by vows nor restrained by superior obligations, is as absurd to the majority as that men should voluntarily drink water when they could have wine, or submit themselves to pain when they might have pleasure. According to them an old maid is an old maid because she cannot help it, and has not been able to make herself a wife; the saying that every Jack has his Jill not including the converse, and giving to every Jill a Jack. Jacks indeed are scarce in a state of civilization which takes the pick of the youth for soldiers, or sends them out as pioneers in the untrodden bush, or puts them into floating coffins with the natural and irremediable chances of going to the bottom multiplied by artificial and remediable means a hundred fold. Jacks fly away early from the paternal nest, and swarm in crowds from the national hive; and the Jills are left, poor souls, in a sad-hearted majority, where lucky the one among them who secures her mate, and is freed from the reproach of old-maidenism for ever. But to say that any one would prefer to be Jackless is both an offence to truth and high treason against nature, and a mere pretence whereby to soothe a wounded self-esteem.

With this jibe is connected another—the utter unloveliness of old maids. Slander and spite, narrowness of view and poverty of soul, meanness and prying, hatred of youth, selfishness as ingrained as her sourness, affections rusted by disuse and unable now to be stirred, the natural sweetness of her womanhood turned to gall by disappointment—and with some, perpetual curiosity on the life that has been denied them—and we have

the typical old maid of popular acceptance. To call a woman an old maid with a sniff, is to call her all these things in a breath; and so the world understands the phrase of which it makes such cruel use. But there are old maids and old maids; and all are not cut after this pattern. Nature, so prodigal of her types, has given us more than one of voluntary female celibates; and though the starched and sour Miss Prue is a fact—more's the pity!—she is only one among others, and her numbers by no means make up the tale of the phalanx.

For one kind, there is the masculine old maid, the semiman, who lives in the country and boats and shoots and hunts and fishes with the enthusiasm of a genuine sportsman. Sound of wind and strong of limb, she may be seen breasting the hills in the early morning, brushing the dew from the bracken as she strides onwards in her brief skirts and leathern gaiters, shouldering her gun and followed by her dogs, out for her day's shooting with the best. Knowing nothing of the effeminacy of tea and toast, with a digestion as untroubled as her nerves, she has breakfasted at six on beef and beer, and probably carries a small flask of whisky slung at her side for a refresher. It would take a strong man to outdo her in her day's toil: and she can walk down the rank and file of the city-bred as easily as she can shoot clean where they miss, and ride straight to hounds where they shy at fences and amble safely through the open gates. one regret of her life is, that she was not mistress of herself and the estate some ten or fifteen years ago, when she would have gone to Africa in search of big game, and have bagged a lion and an elephant as her claim to immortality of renown. But her old mother lived on and demanded her care; so she was forced to content herself with snipe-shooting in the marshes, wild ducks on the lakes, grouse on the moors, and partridges in the stubble, and to leave the elephants and the tigers for more fortunate guns. We all have our unfulfilled desires, our dreams that have not come true, our hope that has run on for years ahead, beckoning and alluring, but that has never been caught nor held as a caressed reality; and this is the desire, the dream, the hope of the sturdy old-maiden sportswoman who has fashioned her life according to her own fancy, and who is not troubled with any inconvenient devotion to Mrs. Grundy or her followers.

To this kind of old maid her womanhood is neither a grace nor a burden. She is a hybrid after her kind, and a jolly good fellow without a determining sex. Consenting so far to the traditions of an effeminate age, she dresses in garments which a liberal vocabulary calls gowns; but she takes care that they are made short, scanty, and without ornament; while over them she wears coats and jackets scarcely, if at all, removed from the coats and jackets of men. Her boots are of the same make and thickness as theirs; and her leathern gaiters meet her tweed knickerbockers all the same as theirs. Her hat is of straw or of felt, destitute of trimming; and if she ties it under her chin at all, it is for personal convenience in the wind, not for obedience to feminine fashions. She wears her hair cropped short; and she is careful to tell you that she washes it every morning when she 'tubs;' with encomiums on the refreshing healthiness of the habit, and a recommendation to all her female acquaintance to go and do likewise. For among the various causes of female degradation and slavery, as she holds it, she places dress and personal adornment as the most powerful. 'Women are the slaves of men because they are the slaves of their milliners,' she says in her loud voice as she crosses her legs and tosses off her full-bodied port-wine with relish; and their emancipation has to come, not from the tyranny of husbands, but from the tyranny of flounces, the tyranny of fallals, the tyranny in short of dress and society.' In her own person she practises what she preaches faithfully enough, and no one could accuse her of sacrificing either her independence or her comfort to her craving for admiration or her care for how she looks. when she goes into society, as she does sometimes, she carries her code with her visibly stitched on to her petticoats; and a plain black silk gown made something like a waistcoat about the body, with a linen collar and cuffs, a good imitation of a man's shirt-front, and small black tie, compose a costume to which her short-cropped hair, bronzed skin, and strident voice give a still more epicene character,-and it is decidedly not a costume designed for the delectation of the beholder or to gain admiration for the wearer.

With all this eccentricity of conduct and appearance, our epicene old maid is probably a person of good heart and just views, when she gives herself the trouble to think on anything outside her kennel and her stable. The very force of character which has expressed itself in such rugged form gives a certain value to her opinions, even when, as is not unlikely, she is a fossilized conservative who holds to Church and State, and things as they were without change on either side, and the three estates of the realm paramount—with none of your communistic radical rubbish as embodied in the theory of the rights of labour and the claims of the working man. All that she knows of the working man is, that he shirks his work when he can, and drinks away his brains and his money to a horrible extent; that he is given to scamping when he is not looked after; and that it would be a good thing for him and

his family if he were farmed out like a Chinese coolie, forced to work honestly and with a will, and kept from making a beast of himself on Saturday nights. This is her view of things, and she declines to receive any other. None the less she sends help to the first poor wretch who is down with sickness, no matter whether it is sickness induced by intemperance or misfortune; for if she has a sharp tongue she has an open hand, as those know who have to endure the one, but who make their account out of the other.

Her sister who haunts the towns is not half so admirable as. and is a great deal more offensive than, this epicene sportswoman, who lives the physical life of a man with a frankness and courage that disarm censure and somehow forbid ridicule. This sister. with the same masculine tendencies, has not the same healthy outlet for them, hence takes to platforms and public speaking, to women's rights and men's iniquities as the best that she can do in the way of protest and self-assertion. She it is who declaims against men as the tyrants and oppressors, not the protectors and guardians of women; she who shrieks aloud to a gaping sisterhood to shake off the fetters which time and custom -misnamed nature -have laid on them; to ape the lives of men, and claim free warren in their special domain, no matter what that might include; she who bids them affirm the absolute equality of, and likeness in power between, the two sexes, and by virtue of this equality, this likeness, to take on themselves the offices and habits hitherto held distinctive to men; she who brings dissension into those married households where the husband holds that the man should be master over himself and their joint lives, and where the wife, taught by her, claims mistresshood not only over herself and the things of her own sphere, but over the man, his name, his honour, and the things common to both; she who teaches mothers to despise their maternity and to find its duties both wearisome and degrading; she whose sole passion is for her own sex, and who measures her regard for both men and women in exact proportion to the exaggerated esteem in which they hold these latter—unless indeed we may add to this questionable passion one nearly as strong for dogs, to which she gives all the human virtues and some that are more than human; she who would upset the established order of life everywhere to carry out her theory of the supremacy of women all through, but who, for her own part, is unable to reason out one single question to its ultimate, or to forecast the effect of her own principles if put into action. This is the epicene old maid as seen in towns; and a fearful evidence of human perversity she is! She has wrought more evil in these latter days than can

be set straight in one generation; and to her evil influences may be traced many a ruined life of womanhood, many a wrecked marriage and distorted soul.

At the other end of the scale stands the painted, frizzed, and frippery old maid who has not learnt the art of growing old, and who carries into her fiftieth year the coquettish airs and graces which she began to study before her glass in her fifteenth. beauty in her hey-day, she still maintains her right to be considered a beauty in her decline, and believes that her rice-powder and bloom of Ninon, her dyes and her false hair, cleverly mask the truth of time, and entitle her to be still ranked among those who have claims on the admiration of men and who give cause for the jealousy of women. She is one of those who, according to their own account, have been besieged all their lives by lovers and adorers, but who for some inexplicable reason have never found the man to whom they would entrust that queer mass of vanity and self-love to which they give by courtesy the name of heart. All the same, it is odd how very much afraid of them unmarried men are: and how these oft-denying old maids carry about with them the sentiment of a drag-net and a stout matrimonial hook, on which, should any unlucky wight be caught, he might bid adieu to all hope of escape, short of the fine to be paid for an exposure in court on a Breach of Promise case. Sometimes this kind of old maid goes in for infantile innocence; and sometimes she thinks the piquancy of naughtiness more to the purpose, and a better game to play on the whole. In the first, as an ingénue, she skirts by dangerous subjects and lisps out risky double meanings in the most innocent way imaginable. And how can you be so ungenerous as to think that a quinquagenarian, with nice red lips and rose-red cheeks, a well-preserved figure and a waist that is still only twenty-three inches round, close measure, can have learnt enough of the world and its wicked ways to understand the true bearing of her naïve remarks, and to know what interpretation her doubtful words and odd allusions can bear? These very innocent old maids posturizing for young ones are perhaps the most embarrassing companions to be met with anywhere. Ingénues of half a century good, they put girls under twenty to the blush, and make even men of the world uncomfortable. But you must take them as they offer themselves. Politeness commands us to accept people at their own valuation; and when fifty will pose for fifteen, it is rude to whisper: 'Thirty-five years too late!' Hence the innocent old maid, with her bare shoulders and her resplendent tresses, her pretence at blushing, her giggle and her coquetry, goes through the world sometimes with the honest belief that she is

admired by the men who laugh at her as they would at a performing monkey, and treat her as a ridiculous sort of marionette, the strings of which they pull and make to dance at their will.

On the other hand, the coquettish old maid who goes in for naughtiness as piquante, and the knowledge of dangerous subjects, with free utterances thereof, as a stimulating kind of conversation that may have its uses, leaves no one in the dark as to her meaning. There is not a question called by girls 'disagreeable' and 'horrid' which she avoids out of regard to the ideal purity of her womanhood; not the darkest byway of vice of which she professes herself ignorant. She discusses freely with men of all ages the various aspects and possibilities of causes célèbres of the details of which some women have never heard, and, if they had, would not speak of even among themselves; and boasts of her intimate acquaintance with the strongest works of the most unbridled authors. Balzac and Belot and Zola are household words in her mouth; and if she has a fault to find with Dumas fils and Hector Malot, it is that they are a shade too reserved for her taste. She thinks that everything may be forgiven for the sake of a sparkling epigram or a rattling anecdote: and a good picture, if outlined in pitch, is still a good picture according to her, and has its merits. gives herself out as one of those women who have no nonsense about them, and despises those of her sisters who have still retained the faculty of blushing and the sense of shame and the forbidden.

Painted and wrinkled, padded and bedizened, with her coarse thoughts, bold words, and leering eyes, she has in herself all the disgust which lies round a Bacchante and a Hecate in one. the beauty of middle age she knows nothing, still less of its honour, of its dignity, its true nobility. Her heart, what of heart she possesses, is in dress, the world, and admiration; but chiefly in the amount of coarse flirting which she can manage to glean for the waning evening of her life. Perhaps—most probably—she adds to this a love of eating and drinking which trenches on intemperance; but this too is of her code. She is one of those who, as she says, respect the senses and honour the flesh; and what are these senses given us for, she adds with a laugh, but to be satisfied and caressed? Such an old maid as this stands as a warning to men and women alike of what and whom to avoid. A few graceless youths perhaps take her up and make fun of her; but the amusement is as revolting as the object, and even those who undertake it turn from it soon in loathing.

Then there is the typical old maid, the starch and sour Miss Prue, to whom, unlike her rollicking sister just spoken of with her

lax morality and threadbare delicacy, most things are more or less shocking, and the barriers of the forbidden are set close against all the avenues of human life. This is the woman to whom youth is of itself something to doubt, to vilify, to depress; to whom the restlessness of childhood is naughtiness now and the prophecy of worse evil to come; to whom the vigorous energies of youth are wrong-doings, its follies vices, its mistakes crimes, its ignorance a sin; to whom the frank friendship of boy and girl is a misdemeanour, the growing love of man and maid a shame, the delights of young pleasure things which no modest girl would accept, no careful mother permit; this is the woman who passes her life in spying behind her curtain and peeping over her blind at all that passes before her window; who knows her neighbours' business better than those neighbours know it themselves; and who is the scourge of the society in which she lives, for the prying and suspicion, the slander and the gossip of which she makes herself the focus. Loveless in her own life, she denies the right of others to joys of which she has been deprived, and would reduce the whole world of youth to the same barren condition as that wherein she fades and withers and grows sourer as she grows older; holding beauty and admiration, dress, amusement, and making love as worse than the seven deadly sins wherever found. She would like to see all the pretty girls whom she knows put into disfiguring garments under the name of 'neat' and 'modest.' She would keep them as much apart from young men as if conventual discipline were the only righteous rule; and such marriages as she must perforce allow, she would have made on the basis of reason only, -the youngest women paired off with more than mature men, and the brightest spirits with the dullest - for ballast. the matter of age, indeed, she would allow of no very young marriages at all; five-and-twenty being the earliest on the woman's side, which, as a rule, she would couple with five-and-forty on the man's, and approve in proportion to the amount of coldness and the absence of passion in both. For she dislikes the idea of much love even in marriage, and can get no farther in the way of affection than a tepid kind of friendship which she calls safe and enduring.

As for men, she would have their lives regulated according to the laws of propriety as formulated by an old maid of her type. She considers smoking a vice, and card-playing an immorality, and would as soon hear that her nephew had forged a bank-note as that he had betted in a race or bred a horse for the turf. The turf indeed is the lowest depth to which iniquity can descend in her scale of vice, and she speaks of those who are suspected of

dabbling in 'tips' and 'long odds,' now under her breath as of something shameful and not to be mentioned save in whispers, now in loud denunciations as evidencing a state of sin which should be proclaimed on the house-tops, as a warning to others and a seal of excommunication set against the evil-doer. A suspicion of free thought in any direction is as bad to her as the grossest immorality-proved; and doubts on the literal exactness of the Seven Days, or on the desirableness of the Athanasian Creed, are translated by her into atheism, clear and crude; just as liberal politics stand for communism, and communism itself for rapine, murder, the absence of all law, and the unchecked exercise of individual bru-With all this, she has a marvellous curiosity on the hidden lives of men, and thinks it in nowise unbecoming to inquire after them when she can. She has an idea that monstrous things go on where two or three of the dangerous sex are gathered together; and she is fain to know of what complexion that monstrosity is, as she 'thinks it only right that women should know the truth.' She is the police of the little world where she has her crabbed being; and she spies after it with even more than police mistrust and watchfulness. She it is who consolidates a floating surmise into a positive fact; who 'knows' where others have only 'heard say;' and who makes it part of her daily exercise to tell' what she knows to all who will listen. Scandal is the breath of her nostrils, the daily bread whereby she lives; and you must cut the very heart out of her before you can cure her of this vice. So she lives and weaves her miserable little webs of mischief for the entanglement of careless feet, and to catch unawares the innocent and unsuspecting. Youth, pleasure, beauty, love-the happiness in these radiant gifts of women better favoured by fate and fortune than herself, and the freer lives of men outside the safe precincts of the drawing-room—these are the lions in her way which she devotes herself to destroy, the windmills of iniquity at which she tilts with the determination to overthrow. The joy of childhood, thoughtless, restless, untiring—the exultation of youth, glad in its strength, undimmed in its radiance, unchilled in its hope--the passions of maturity, firmly fixed and energetically pursued—in a word, life in any of its outlets broader than the narrow path of her own checked existence—this is the enemy which she feels bound to subdue if she can; and a society in which is to be found an old maid of this pattern, of good social standing and with some amount of local influence, is perhaps the society of all others to be most avoided by those who are not bound to it already, while those who are forced to remain its members are of all people the most to be pitied.

Besides these several old maids already discussed, there are others of quite different types; and of these, who so beautiful as that sweet-natured, generous, and loving woman of whom one can never understand how it is that she has remained unmarried, so womanly, so loving, so born to be happy and to give happiness as she is, and who seems a kind of spiritual mother to all rather than the natural parent of a few? Sharer of all joys, soother of all pains, no one can marry or be ill, have a legacy or die without her. She is the first person to whom the young people confide the secret of their engagement; the first to whom the distracted mother sends when her child is down with fever and she wants comfort as much as aid. Whatever goes wrong in the family, she bears her share of the trouble that ensues. If there are grave anxieties about Herbert's conduct at college, or Paul's slender prospects of passing his examination; if Mary is delicate or Ellen wayward, the dear old maid of large heart, and views as large as her love, is the one to be told and appealed to, the one whose advice is asked and from whom consolation is expected—with expectations never disappointed. For this is her life: having no life, properly so called, of her own, she lives only for others, with sympathies practically inexhaustible and powers of help unlimited. The rector's wife puts the management of half the parish business into her hands; and it is the old maid of the village who sees to the clothing-club and the penny savings bank, who is the secretary and treasurer of all the little societies afloat, and who has double days of attendance everywhere when others have only one, taking on herself the heavy end of the stick, but never seeming to think that she does anything out of the way or in the least deserving of thanks. Her fixed idea is that all wives and mothers are occupied from morning to night with their homes and children, while she has nothing on earth to do, and is therefore glad to be made useful. And for the most part her friends gratify her desire, and in nowise stint the burdens which it is for their pleasure or advantage that she should bear for them.

If she is useful as a friend, as a relation she is simply invaluable. Her married sisters find in her a servant and a counsellor in one; and the children have a second mother, oftentimes wiser and more helpful than their own. The only difficulty is when she has more married sisters than one, and all want her at once, while she is dragged different ways by her affections, and has to decide on a single duty when she wants to fulfil several. In which case the chances are that she goes to the house where she is most uncomfortable, but fancies herself most needed; herself being the last consideration on the list, and sacrifice coming as a matter of

course in her line of action. To the little ones auntie is a perennial Santa Claus, a familiar fairy godmother, a vocal Mother Bunch where is no such word as finis, no such page as the last. Though but slenderly provided for by the father's will, and infinitely poorer than those unmarried sisters themselves, she seems to possess a very Fortunatus's purse so far as the nursery is concerned; and is for ever endowing the little folks with splendid gifts that make them happy as kings and queens to play with and to destroy. There are divine depths in her pocket whence can always be fished up luxurious morsels of Lumps of Delight or sticky squares of toffy by which the worst woes of childhood are assuaged; and when young activities grow wearisome, and the children have to be kept quiet and amused, she gathers them round her like a modern Orpheus and charms them into tranquillity by her endless histories, 'all out of her own head.' The sacred half hour of twilight is sure to be consecrated to her-to be her own undisputed; and 'tell us a story, auntie!' comes from half a dozen fresh lips as the younger climb on her knees and the elder hang about her shoulders, and all press round her chair as Italians crowd round an improvisatore or Arabs squat round the story-teller in the bazaars, waiting in breathless anxiety for the delightful poem told in prose that she will spin out for their benefit.

'I am sure I do not know what we should all do without auntie!' half sighs the mother, maybe one whom the cares of her family have rendered far too angular and irritable for the weaving of pretty stories about enchanted rabbits that were by rights fine young princes, or of lovely little girls who lived with cross old shebears till they tamed them into very fair representatives of humanity. Or maybe these same cares of her family have made mamma fat and indolent, only too glad to let things drop out of her own hands into the keeping of any one who will pick them up, and to drift for her own part into somnolence and ease. So that 'I am sure I do not know what we should all do without auntie,' is a just tribute to the dear old-maid sister's worth, and a confession of her priceless value in the household thoroughly deserved.

There are few people who would be more missed out of English life than this old maid of large-hearted, generous nature, this self-sacrificing friend, this spiritual mother of other women's children. If she makes no noise in the world, she fills a most important place both in the house and society; and, while others prate of woman's work and woman's rights, is content to do the one and to embody the other without blare or bluster. She knows nothing of the hostility to men and the ordinances of nature by which some of

her kind belie their own womanhood, and seek to destroy the charm and loveliness of that of others. By some chance, either of disinclination for those who offered, or of love for one whom she could not marry, she has been swept by the current into the shallows by the side, and has no personal part in the great stream of life flowing ever from time into eternity. But she is neither soured nor rendered unhappy by her lot; and she contrives to crowd it with blessings beyond those which fall to the share of most. She has the blessing of love always with her, the blessing of helpfulness, the blessing of self-sacrifice. True to the best instincts and traditions of her sex, she is in harmony with her surroundings, and knows nothing of that jarring discord by which the man-hater sets her own teeth on edge, and offends the tastes and feelings of all who know her. To her the quiet deference of the weaker to the stronger seems as much a matter of course as does the woman's loving care for children, and the help to be given by sister to sister in the hour of need. She has not read the book of human nature as something all awry—to be put right only by the efforts of the unsexed; on the contrary, she is content with things as they are, so far as certain eternal distinctions go; and she does not refuse to see that, if some men tyrannize, the greater portion protect, and that the rule must not be judged of by the exceptions. Natural, pure, and unsophisticated, the love which she has missed in any special form in her own life she neither vilifies nor derides. neither deforms through envy nor pursues when the time has passed; but she translates it into general benevolence for all who need her help, into spiritual maternity, and a sisterhood as wide as her world. She carries about with her the sentiment of moral worth and the sweetness of affection like an aroma; and even the graceless pay homage to her purity, and the unloving confess her charm. Active in her own sphere, she has no unsatisfied desires, no senseless cravings of unwomanly ambition. there is no corner of her being anywhere to which that word unwomanly could be applied. On the contrary, the greatest beauty that she possesses is just this of pure unsullied womanhood throughout; so that, 'old maid' though she be, her nature is as rich as any of those whose lives have been more complete, and her days are as useful as any of those whose duties are more defined. In her own way she is of the salt by which society is kept pure; and the world would be unspeakably impoverished were her kind face and helpful hands to be taken from it.

Of another kind altogether is the natural nun, that old maid of Protestant communities who, in Catholic countries, would have found her fitting place in a convent, where she would have been

happier in her safe enclosure than is possible to her now with liberty and want of protection. Timid and inactive, needing direction and companionship, but afraid of men and not at home with children, the old maid of this kind is by nature only a daughter, a school-girl, a subordinate. For all her youth she has probably been under the control of her mother, and has come to her independence when too late to profit by it, and when long use has made it, not independence, but loneliness. She is a mental cripple whose crutch is suddenly snatched from her, and her steps are feeble, uncertain, and tottering. Fifty years of age as she is, she feels like a girl of fifteen; and she regrets her mother as much for the moral support which she gave her, as for the love that was her sole possession and her only pleasure. She knows nothing of business; and there is always something to be done in that way, wherein she is as helpless as a child, and the prey of any who choose to fasten themselves on her. Her servants rule her; and the man about the house, whatever he may be-butler, gardener, or only handyman on general jobs—is a tyrant whose yoke she sometimes finds it heavy to bear. Everything frightens her; from the long lonely evenings, to the solitary walks and drives-from the lawyer's letters which she has to answer, to the banker's account, while she lives in a perpetual state of dread lest it should be overdrawn. But if you were to ask her to take a companion to live with her, or to make Mr. So-and-so her friend and adviser, she would be more frightened still, and would declare that the last state would be worse than the first. All the horrible stories that she has ever read of treacherous companions putting stealthy pinches of poison into the padrona's tea for the chance of what they can filch in the confusion of her death-of base men-friends worming themselves into a poor lone woman's confidence, then cajoling her to sign papers beyond her few poor wits to understand, but which when signed give away her fortune and leave her destitute on the world—all come back on her frightened, self-tormenting memory; and, dreadful as her loneliness is, she feels that it is better than the unknown dangers to be run by the admission of strangers into the sacred penetralia, when she would be even more helpless than she is now.

This is the old maid who, as time goes on, becomes more and more eccentric, more and more shut up from the world and devoted to cats and worsted-work. Her dress is a study of oddity and ugliness; and she never changes from the fashions that were in vogue when her mother died. Indeed, according to the law of getting used to a thing in the way of eyesight, she imperceptibly exaggerates them, so that the fashion even of her own day would have disowned her, and we may be sure that none other would adopt her. As her

dress exaggerates in form and colour, so do her manners and her Secluded from the world, reading little and hearing less, she fossilizes in her place, and in a few years becomes a living anachronism, a ladylike kind of Rip Van Winkle, for whom time has slept and changes have not been, and over whose mind progress has not traced the lightest furrow. Too gentle to be anything but amiable, never mixing herself up with scandals or disputes, taking no part in the life of the place anyhow, for good or evil alike, she is yet practically friendless; and when people speak of her it is rather with contempt than with the pity which she merits. But the world is, as a rule, without pity for those who do not please it; and an eccentric old maid, devoted to cats and worsted-work, with queer manners and an odd style of dress, who makes no confidences, asks no advice, knits up no intimacies, but just lives as a nun unprofessed-wanting the director-offers no points for the imagination to seize on and sympathize with, though much that can be laughed at and ridiculed. If it is impossible to credit her with active ill-doing or faults of any gravity, she is deluged with absurdities; and the society, which in fact knows nothing about her at all, makes her the peg on which to hang every kind of monkeyfied anecdote and half insane adventure. If she keeps two cats, she has the reputation of keeping twenty; if she likes to work in her garden among the flowers, some one is found to swear that he has seen her digging up potatoes; if she goes out rather later in the day than is the custom of the place where she lives, they say that she takes her walks in the middle of the night; if, as is very likely, she confounded Sedan with Solferino, or, as is more likely, knows nothing of either, they laugh it out over the next dinner-table, how Miss Batseyes thought the last Napoleon to be the first somehow escaped from Elba for the second time, and how she muddled up the Franco-German war with Frederick the Great and the battle of Prague, with vague surmises as to Hohenlinden and Austerlitz. And all the time poor innocent, timid, woolly-brained and inoffensive Miss Batseyes sits by her own fireside asking nothing of men and gods but to be let alone and not disturbed by unwelcome visitors, who bewilder her when they are there, and leave her upset and unstrung when they go away.

Of the same type, with a difference, is the sweet and saintly old maid, to whose life love has always been a stranger, and who never, even in her youngest days, thought of marriage with anything but horror, of motherhood with anything but dread. She too is of the tribe of natural nuns for whom Protestantism has no place, and whose natural home is the convent. This again is of a kind that does not change with the years. She has always been the same.

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When young she moved through the world in a stately statuesque kind of way, making the despair of all the men who loved her—perhaps the more because she was unattainable; and now when old she is the same, with just the difference between the lily when it stands up in its first young bloom, and the lily when it is drooping to its fall—between wax, fresh, bloomy, rosy, and wax, faded, yellow, and with all the bloom rubbed off. But whether young or old, she is always of the same spiritual type; virginal, untroubled by dreams, untouched by the senses in any direction, with a few, very few affections, and these with a strange want of personality in their character,—quite as satisfying if the objects thereof are separated from her for years as if they are next door; a woman whom the love of man never warmed, the caress of a child never thrilled; the modern vestal, the Protestant nun; in the world but not of it; passionless and pure;—but a statue, not a woman.

Round these five original types of the manly old maid, the coquettish, the spiteful, the maternal, and the virginal, may be gathered the many varieties to be found in society. Sometimes borrowing from either side, we come upon strangely composite characters; but a little study will classify them fairly enough; and we must always give weight to social position and the traditions which accompany it. For instance, the naturally maternal woman of a certain position is scarcely able to fulfil her instincts so actively, so completely, as if she belonged to a lower sphere where hands are wanted because help is costly. Rich and wellborn, we should see her more as the sweet sympathizer than the active helper, the recipient of confidence rather than the bearer of burdens. But the core of the nature would be the same; the manifestations only differing by reason of circumstance. like manner, the naturally manly woman, if of high degree, would be kept by the traditions of her order from the extremes into which one of lower place might allow herself to run. Instead of shooting and the like, she would perhaps administer her estate with as much capacity for business as a man, and without the intervention of any agent superior to a bailiff; and, in place of declaiming against the disabilities of women on a platform, content herself with after-dinner speeches to her tenantry full of sound good sense and the absence of gush. Nevertheless the thing would be the same, and lovely or unlovely by its internal worth rather than by its external action. In any case however, we have such beautiful types of old maids as make us forgive the disagreeable and unwomanly; and when we have two things to look at, is it not the wisest plan to shut our eyes to the unpleasing, and to see only the more desirable?

# A Burden.

BY PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

HAVE I not dreamed of you all night long,
Love, my love?
Shall I not tell my dream in a song,
Oh my love?

Have I not worshipped you six long years,
Queen, my queen?

Have I not given you bounteous tears,
Oh my queen?

Have I not said when the spring was here—
'Sweet, my sweet,
More than the pride and flower of the year,
Oh my sweet'?

Have I not said in the dawning gray,
'Heart, my heart,
I shall see my lady ere close of day,
Oh my heart'?

Have I not said in the silent night,
'Dove, my dove,
So soft of voice and rapid of flight,
Oh my dove'?

Have I not said in the summer hours,
'Rose, my rose,
Greatly exalted above all flowers,
Oh my rose'?

Have I not said in my great despair,
'Soul, my soul,
Love is a grievous burden to bear,
Oh my soul'?

Have I not turned to the sea and said,
'Life, my life,
If she be not mine, be thou my bed,
Oh my life'?

Have I not dreamed of your eyes and cried,
'Light, my light,
Lead me where love may be satisfied,
Oh my light'?

Have I not trodden a weary road,
Saint, my saint?
And where at last shall be my abode,
Oh my saint?

Sometimes I say in an hour supreme,
'Bride, my bride,
I shall hold you fast and not in a dream,
Oh my bride!'

# Scotching a Snake.

BY STEPHEN J. MAC KENNA.

## CHAPTER IV.

#### CAVIARE AND CONFESSION.

Twelve o'clock, sir—it's twelve, Captain Murdell—twelve o'clock, sir!' fell on my ear the morning after the horrid orgy recorded above, and I awoke with a parched mouth and a splitting brain to find my servant Jackson by my bedside, with a welcome cup of tea that I clutched and drained ere I could speak a word. With a great effort I rose and plunged into my bath, splashing about and pouring the ice-cold water on my burning head until some temporary relief was obtained, and I was enabled to complete my toilet.

Breakfast! Ugh! the very thought almost made me sick; so, quite unable to endure the loathing for food, the sense of loss of self-respect, the utter languor and disgust the debauch had entailed, I hurried out of my lodgings to seek in the pleasant shades of the Park some relief from my misery and some alleviation of the dreadful confusion of thought which was reigning supreme in my whirling brain.

The occurrences of the last night up to the time the punch was introduced were clear enough, but from that event out, memory was almost a chaos. Presently the refreshing south-western breeze brought me round a little; and, as I became more myself and gradually recovered my mental calmness, thoughts took a more tangible shape, and I was able to view my conduct during the card party and put together in something like order the recollections mistily floating through my mind. What did I say and do? Did I, or did any one, mention Miss Kenton's name or her brother's? Could I have been so mad as to introduce the topic? Young Tysdall had been in a fearful temper—that I remembered well; and his face glowering with passion, the eyes standing out of his head with scarce suppressed rage, seemed even now glaring at me. Had I hinted at his approaching marriage, or even made fun of it? I knew that men, when excited by wine, will do and say things the

exact contrary of what they wish and think when they are sober, and I shuddered lest I should have so committed myself as to seriously injure the future prospects of Louise Kenton. This uncertainty became at length so intolerable that I determined to set it at rest by going at once to Danvers's lodgings, and satisfying myself that my horrid suspicions were either true or perfectly unfounded.

'Captain Danvers, sir? Yes, sir. Will you walk up?' and, ascending the stairs with a trembling heart, I was ushered into his

dressing-room.

'Ha, Murdell, my boy! Come to look after your coin, eh? Well I hardly expected you so early after last night's work;' and Danvers shook me warmly by the hand, as he half smiled while looking me through and through, as though to fathom my every thought.

I felt myself blushing all over like a school-girl, as I muttered something about apologising for my conduct last night: 'but—but really——'

- 'But really, like all of us, you were a little overcome by that Roman-Punch: hang that fellow Bender, he made it as strong as old Nick. 'Jove though, you look as fresh as paint after it all, and you certainly were "cut."'
- 'I am thoroughly ashamed; and made such a fool of myself that I fear I did or said something to annoy Tysdall.'
- 'Ah! then I suppose you don't well remember what occurred?' he eagerly questioned.

'No, I do not.'

Danvers looked greatly relieved, and laughingly asked if I knew what I had won or lost?

'No; to tell you the truth, I was so horribly nervous this morning, that I did not think of it, but—' and I looked in my purse—'I suppose I must have dropped about ten pounds or so.'

'Not a bit of it! The "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" took better care of you than that. Look, here's your money; I took it from you last night, lest you might get into trouble; and he handed me a paper rouleau of twenty-five sovereigns.

'There, don't say I haven't acted like a father to you; that's

your share of the plunder.'

'Ha! I had no idea I won anything at all. Who lost?'

'Who lost? Why, who always loses, and will always lose, if he plays so recklessly, but Tysdall?'

'How much? Was he heavily hit?'

Danvers slowly and warily, and watching me closely, answered: Yes; I think from what Mockridge said, Tysdall must have dropped—let me see, fifty and thirty makes eighty, and forty—he



must have lost between one hundred and one hundred and fifty.'

- 'Between a hundred and a hundred and fifty!' I echoed the words with astonishment, for their sound seemed strangely familiar to me, and a dim recollection of having heard them whispered across the table the previous night seemed to dawn across my mind. I suppose I must have shown some such thought in my face, for Danvers eyed me keenly for a moment, and then he began to chatter away as though he wished to drive my thoughts from the subject.
- 'Yes that was about the figure' ('the figure!' I seemed also to dreamily remember this expression); 'he would play on and on, wildly and madly, and you, Master Murdell, did your best to encourage him. That fellow Mockridge must have landed it all, for I lost exactly what you won. But there,' he continued, as he put the finishing touch to an intricate cravat knot, 'there, I am done, equipped for conquest, and fairer than Solomon in all his glory. Now what do you say to breakfast?'
- 'Oh! I can't touch anything; that horrid stuff is boiling in my head still; I could not eat if I was to be paid for it.'
- 'Oh, nonsense, man! come down and try; I'll have a caviare toast made—eh, won't that tempt you? Well stay, I'll manufacture a "doctor," and if that don't set you up, I'll eat my head. Just touch the bell, will you?' and the captain went on to titivate his front hair while he whistled 'Batti, Batti,' from the last night's opera.
  - 'Tenpenny, the materials for a "doctor;" look sharp now.'
- 'Yes, sir,' and the cunning-looking, lathy lad who had answered the bell disappeared on his errand.
- 'Curious name, Tenpenny, isn't it? I gave it to him. He was holding my horse one day for ten minutes, and on my tendering him sixpence he positively refused to take it, saying "his charge" was always a penny a minute. I thought it a pity such talent should be wasted in the streets, and took him into my service. Sharp lad, and no mistake.'
- 'Ah, that's all right!' he continued, as the lad entered with a tray. 'Now get breakfast, Tenpenny—caviare toast, strong tea, and that cold pâté.'
  - 'Right, sir,' and Tenpenny vanished.
- 'Now for the "doctor." Six drops of this tonic "pick-me-up"—and Danvers went on with the concoction, suiting the action to the word—'half a glass of pale brandy; now stir those well together, Murdell, while I neatly break this egg—that's it—now reach me one of those forks'—and he stirred and 'whipped' the ingredients

until they frothed up in the large tumbler—'there, swallow that, my boy, and see if you aren't better.'

I certainly did feel much better after the rather nauseous draught, and was able to join with some show of appetite in a very neatly served breakfast; but I think the mental relief I experienced, now that I felt tolerably certain I had not offended Tysdall, had quite as much to do with my performance as had the 'doctor.'

Danvers chatted away incessantly, appearing, from the tone of his conversation, to begin to regard me as likely to act the part of 'pigeon,' as well as young Tysdall. He disparaged the latter's style of play, praised mine, wished he could play half as well, and abused Mockridge as a gambler who was making a fortune out of us all. 'I am such a fool, you see,' he went on. 'If I stuck to the horses I should do pretty well; but when I get with a lot of wild fellows like you I can't resist cards, and at them I am always deuced unlucky. But, by Jove! Tysdall is howling for his revenge, and I suppose I must look for mine also—but I'd sooner waste my money at Newmarket.'

- 'Ah! by the way, how do you stand for the "First Spring"?'
- 'First rate—I think we shall pull off a "pot."'
- 'We! who is your partner? Mockridge?'

He cast a sharp searching glance in my eyes before he answered:

- 'No; Tysdall. Did he not tell you?'
- 'Of course, now I think of it, he did. Well, thank goodness I never had a taste for racing.'
- 'Oh! it's the pleasantest vice I know of, and a tolerably innocent one. Why don't you join us on the twenty-second? We shall have a jolly party, and half-a-crown to the guard will get us a compartment to ourselves, and you can give Tysdall and myself our revenge in the train. Eh?'
- 'I should like it amazingly,' was my answer; 'but you fellows are too fast for me; I feel like a baby amongst you clever men whose brains are sharpened by constant exposure to the keen air of town.'

'Ah, funny dog! But, setting chaff aside, will you come? It will be awfully jolly, and I'm sure Tysdall will be glad.'

- 'Well, I'll think about it, and let you know. Now I must be off, and really am very much obliged to you for your care of me last night and kindness this morning.'
- 'Oh, nonsense!—all in the way of trade. That "doctor," you see, has set you up.'
- 'Thanks, it has really—but the knowledge that I did not quarrel with Tysdall (how I got that stupid idea in my head I can't conceive) has done me more.'

'Pooh! he was drunk, and in a rage with his badluck—I am sorry for him; he really ought not to go on that way—no fortune could stand it; but he won't take my advice. Shall you see him to-day?'

'No, I have some business; besides, I am ashamed to face any one after last night. I'll let you know if I can join you at Newmarket—and now good-bye.'

'Ta, ta; come if you can, and,' he laughingly added as he ushered me out, 'beware of Roman-Punch à la Bender.'

## CHAPTER V.

### DARKNESS BRINGS LIGHT.

A GLORIOUS morning found us four 'reprobates,' as no doubt the more moral portion of society would call us, in a comfortable first-class railway carriage, whirling away at a most exhilarating pace down to Newmarket Spring Meeting.

Tysdall had got over his recent heavy losses, and was as cheerful as (what he considered) a first-rate book on the approaching races could make him, while the rest of us were in the highest possible spirits, chatting and laughing and chaffing as if losing was an utter impossibility. For myself, I had recovered my wonted equanimity, being, indeed, rather sanguine than otherwise that I was on the right track, and that my object would before long be attained. Danvers was boisterous; even the sullen Mockridge came out in quite a refreshing style, seeming to be as cheerful and lively as his grovelling nature would allow.

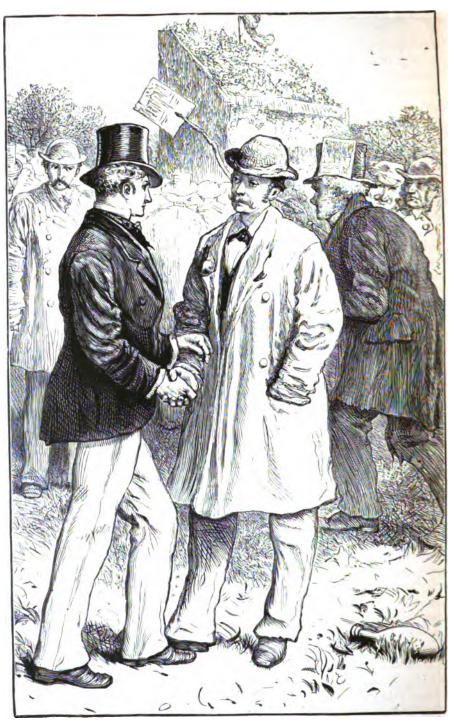
A brilliant meeting commenced, and the first race sent my companions' spirits up to the highest mark; but after the second event things took a sudden turn, and I soon found out that the wonderful winning book that Tysdall had made in part conjunction with Danvers was unfortunately based—as such things are apt to be—on erroneous calculations; and as event after event was run off, their discomfiture became complete, until it was announced that the whole compilation was a failure, and they stood to lose, or rather had lost, six hundred pounds, Tysdall's share being four to Danvers's two hundred pounds. As Tysdall spoke to me of this result while waiting for our train, I confess I was seriously alarmed. Again all my share in the matter rose bitterly before my mind, until I was quite confounded at my madness in thus encouraging the too willing young fellow in courses that must end in his ruin if not speedily checked.

Good heavens! what had I done, what was I doing, in thus for a mere idea—now it seemed no more—leading, nay, almost driving, my friend and Louise Kenton's lover into a very vortex of gambling?

And for what? The mere chance of detecting a scoundrel cheating. I was in agonies of mental anguish and remorse, and as the train dashed townwards it probably bore no other man so utterly cast down and disgusted with himself. A sullen gloom settled over the whole party, not in the least lightened by the production of champagne provided by Danvers or the subsequent pool of écarté on the same plan as we had previously played. As before, I won a little, and as usual Tysdall lost, but not very heavily, while I noticed that always after passing through the gloom of a tunnel the cards were invariably most favourable to either Danvers or Mockridge, or both. I was very cool-my dreary thoughts at least did me that service—and I scrutinised the cards with the eye of an eagle, in hopes of discovering some mark, some slight shade of difference; anything that could account for the knowledge (I felt it must be so) these men had of their relative values. I suppose I must have shown something of restlessness or suspicion in my manner, as, shortly before arriving in London, Mockridge-who, by the way, seemed slightly tipsy-proposed to leave off on the plea of fatigue.

An attack of my old enemy, liver complaint, confined me to my lodgings for some time, but I heard from Tysdall, who occasionally visited me, that he still continued his écarté parties, always with the same result, Danvers and he losing, while Mockridge won, until I felt quite miserable, and feared that a prophecy of Stanley Kenton's would probably come true, and the young fellow be confirmed in these bad habits. After a long and thorough discussion one evening with Kenton, we determined to give my plan one further trial (with a novel feature that will later appear), and then, if unsuccessful, throw up the matter in despair. The 'Chester Cup' day was fixed upon for the final effort, and as it rapidly approached I tried my utmost to put all discouraging thoughts away from me, and to convince myself that we should hunt these scoundrels down and catch them in their own net. I had gently sounded Tysdall two or three times concerning his opinion of the play; but he was too much of a gentleman to suspect such a fascinating man as Danvers, and lived in a fool's paradise that his 'ill-luck' was the cause of all his losses.

A bright May-day found us in the quaint old feudal city, mere ciphers amongst the thousands of very good and bad 'hats' assembled to see the celebrated race for 'the Cup.' The event was closely contested, and the excitement tremendous, as the horses approached the goal in a rainbow cloud of varied colours. Only a few strides from the winning-post it seemed that there must be a 'dead heat,' the crowd being actually hushed into silence with intense excitement; then a long lean bay neck,



THANK GOD! 1 THOUGHT 1 MUST LOSE. Digitized by Google

flecked with drifts of foam and surmounted by distended eyeballs glaring as in a death agony, shot with a supreme effort to the front, while a maddening yell from the assembled thousands proclaimed that a comparative 'outsider' was the victor. Tysdall had won, and, as he turned and gripped my hand, he paled as though about to faint, while he gasped out:

'Thank God! I thought I must lose; I'll never bet again.'

Danvers came up with joy beaming in every line of his handsome face to offer his congratulations; but, as he turned away to answer some remark of Mockridge's, the whole expression changed and faded into a black, baffled, devilish look, revealing to me alone the hideous serpent-nature of the man who could thus in two consecutive moments so alter his countenance that no human being could tell which was its normal appearance. Mockridge was sullen and brutal, while Tysdall gradually became uproarious in his gladness, and, it must be confessed, from deep draughts of the strongest drinks,—insisting on standing a champagne lunch; at which I suggested that we should all return to town by an early train, and thus avoid the mob. Soon after, I left the hotel to use my influence with the station-master—an old Indian sabreur friend who had turned his sword into a railway key-in procuring an empty compartment for our party, and making other arrangements for our journey, and was able to return with the welcome news that we could be accommodated and suffer no intrusion save from the unnoticeable presence of an invalid and his attendant, who dreaded getting into a carriage crowded with 'roughs.' found Tysdall had (as indeed, I quite expected) been again walking very freely into both wine and brandy, and, without being tipsy, was in that happy drowsy state—the natural and immediate reaction from great excitement drowned in potent liquors-when a man will do anything that is suggested by a friend.

The train, I told them, was not to start for three-quarters of an hour, so Danvers and Mockridge, hoping Tysdall would be better in time for our start, made some excuse about seeing an acquaint-ance, and went off, promising to meet us on the platform. Now was the critical time. Tysdall was lying on the sofa smoking a cigar. I let down the blinds to keep out the glaring western sun, poured out a glass of neat brandy for myself and a much larger one for my friend, took a chair by the side of the sofa, and began to prose to him as slowly and sententiously as I could about the evils of gambling whether on the turf or at cards, and the inevitable loss both of property and character that must follow such a course. He smoked and sipped, and sipped and smoked for awhile; then he got weary of my dull low voice, promised quietly a full

and total amendment—he had really meant what he said on the race course about never betting again—and finally went off fast asleep.

'Well, is young Bacchus revived yet?' asked Danvers, a moment or so before the train was to start.

- 'Oh, as right as the mail!' I answered. 'He will be here in a second.'
- 'Now gents, take your seats for London! take your seats!' shouted the porters all along the train.
- 'Where the deuce can he be, Murdell?' impetuously asked Mockridge, as we got into our compartment, in the far corner of which were already seated the two the station-master had forced on us.

I got possession of the window and looked eagerly up and down the platform.

'By Jove, he'll be late!' I cried, as the engine gave a loud warning whistle and a slight jerk told that we were starting.

'Confound it, it's too bad of him!' broke out Danvers, showing more of the open devil than I had known him ever do before.

'Here you are, jump in, sir!' and the station-master thrust into the carriage, now moving rapidly along the platform, a young man—but it was not Tysdall. Mockridge swore aloud, while Danvers contented himself with eagerly scanning the new comer. He was a snob, a wretched city snob, dressed in the most outrageously loud style, smoking a vile cigar, flushed in the face, and apparently considerably disguised in drink.

'Hullo!' remarked this unpleasant intruder, as he half tumbled on to the seat between Danvers and Mockridge: 'hullo, a swells' carriage, by Jove! Well, it don't matter—Company's servant put me in—and if he didn't I've lots to pay the odd dollars; thanks to old "Tearaway" pulling through, and here's luck to him!' and the misguided clerk pulled from his pocket a travelling flask of brandy, and with it a bundle of notes and some loose sovereigns that rolled about the floor in all directions. He grabbed them up eagerly, but not before we could all see that the notes were heavy ones and of the true Bank of England brand.

'Have a suck, sir?' he asked, offering the flask to Danvers, when he had collected his money and refreshed himself with a strong nip of the brandy.

Danvers accepted the flask, and then passed it on to Mockridge and me, while he commenced a conversation with the objectionable moneyed owner.

'Yes,' answered the latter to an enquiry, 'I've pulled off a deuced good thing; 500l. by Jove; and every penny paid on the

nail: d——d if I don't cut the shop and stick to 'osses for a real, rattling, good living—been winning like old boots of late, and ain't afraid to back my luck!'

'That's what I like to see in a man,' remarked Mockridge, encouragingly, and in evident hopes of having a 'pull' out of the said backing; 'that's right—if a man is afraid to back himself when he is safe to win, he must be a fool.'

Just then the express rushed into a tunnel and all was darkness and rattle for some moments.

'Dash it all! what do the Company mean by not giving us a light?' queried the stranger, as we emerged once more into day-light.

'Ah! they seldom do on excursion days,' answered Mockridge; but the lamp-man at Chester could have told a very different tale.

At Stafford the train stopped for a few moments to water the engine, and I seized the opportunity to jump out and procure a couple of bottles of champagne and a tumbler, as we were getting dull, and I declared my spirits falling about Tysdall whom we had left behind.

'Now, Danvers, we will drink your luck,' I remarked, jumping into the train as it moved off. Danvers bore the remark beautifully, for of course, being partners with Tysdall, he was *supposed* to have won, though I had quite made up my mind that all the bets were made to lose, with men acting in concert with Mockridge and Danvers, who would necessarily come in for full share in the winnings, besides having his apparent losses made good.

'Egad, that was a good thought of yours, Murdell,' said Mockridge; 'my mouth is as dry as a lime-burner's basket—never mind a cork-screw; hand me one and I'll have his silver-neck off in a second.' He took one of the bottles, opened his pen-knife, and with the blade made a few upward chip chip strokes, when the whole top—wire, cord, silver paper, glass and all—shot up in the air with a sharp crack, and the pinky wine foamed into the tumbler held ready to receive it.

'Perhaps these gentlemen will join us?' asked the city gent, as he tossed down half a tumblerful I offered him. The one who was muffled in furs and appeared to be the invalid, merely shook his head and relapsed into a semi-doze, while his attendant, with a puritanical air, stiffly remarked, 'Neither my master nor myself ever touch strong drinks!'

'The more fools you then!' muttered Mockridge, half under his breath as he drained the last of the bottle, and proceeded to open the other, to ensure a fair division. The gentleman from the city declared that champagne always disagreed with his inward

system, unless corrected by a warmer fluid, carrying the theory into practice by a hearty pull at the brandy bottle after every mouthful of champagne, the natural result being (if possible) increased excitement. He bragged and lied outrageously of his skill and luck at betting—at chicken-hazard—at rouge et noir—and even at écarté (which he pronounced with an accent peculiar to himself and his like), and declared himself perfectly willing and able to play any one of the best 'nobs' at the clubs for all the said 'nob' might be worth, and in token of his solvency pulled from another pocket more notes and gold. At this I noticed the great evil eyes which Mockridge fixed on the money, and then, questioningly, on Danvers.

'Why should we not have a little game?' I asked; 'it's so stupid sitting doing nothing.'

'Hallo, Murdell! you don't actually mean to propose gamb-Fie-a sedate chap like you!' Danvers seemed to be recovering from the depression, or rather ill-humour, he had exhibited since Tysdall missed the train, and the rare smile lit up the handsome face, as he persuaded the drunken city cad to join We played on precisely the same terms as we did the night of my debut at Tysdall's, and with much the same results; our new acquaintance filling the part of our absent friend with equal ability for losing. He seemed a little sobered at the commencement of the game, but a few more glasses of wine set him off full swing, and he played as recklessly as Tysdall himself might have done. Still, there was no denying that luck was fearfully against him, and the cards that Danvers and Mockridge held were astoundingly valuable to the holders. However, the city man played on bravely, never grumbling in his intoxication, except when some dark tunnel or other caused a cessation of the game—only for it to recommence with increased losses to both him and me. time the invalid and his companion evinced no emotion save sullen contempt for our immoral proceedings—the sick man appearing to doze nearly the whole journey, while the other stared steadily out of the carriage-window, or amused himself with a missionary publication. We flew through Rugby like a whirlwind, and still the game went on; Mockridge gloating visibly over the heavy sums he constantly won, and Danvers delicately praising our companion's play, while deprecating the extraordinary run of luck that had set in against him.

Three loud warning whistles announced our approach to the long tunnel at Watford, and our friend had barely time to finish a deal, when we rushed into the black jaws of the cutting. The last thing I saw was a slight half-turn on the part of the occupants of

the far corner seats, and the hiss of a stifled whisper fell on my ear as we were buried in darkness. I shut my eyes, as I always unconsciously do when thus flying through the bowels of earth. The first minute—the second—surely the third was nearly completed? when a loud cry caused me to look up. We were in daylight again, the invalid's attendant was standing over Danvers, while shouting in a commanding voice, 'Stop, gentlemen! one moment—there's something wrong here!'

Danvers and Mockridge were deadly pale, and glared up in the interloper's face like murderers. The city man sat perfectly sober and calm—his eye fixed on Mockridge, and ready for a deadly spring.

'D—n you! take that!' and Danvers aimed a terrific blow at the detective standing over him—it was parried, and like a lightning flash Danvers was knocked to the ground. The other policeman, our 'city' friend, flew at Mockridge's throat, whose arms I pinioned from behind. He cursed furiously, and writhed and kicked at me like a wild beast.

'Murdell! are you mad?' shrieked Danvers, half rising from the floor, his features all streaming with blood.

'No, he's not—you lie still, will you? or I'll clap bracelets on the pair of ye. I'm Sergeant Williams, of Scotland Yard. Eh, Captain Danvers, you know the name, don't you? Get up now, and I'll tell you all about it. You may let him go, Bill,' he continued to the moneyed gentleman from the city who had acted his part so well (we allowed Mockridge to be free), 'he'll be quiet enough now.' Danvers slowly raised himself and sat down—his face was deadly pale and the blood flowing down lent a ghastly horror to its fixed lines.

The invalid had turned round on the first onset, and now sat calmly with his eyes bent to the ground—the mufflings all thrown aside—a wonderful brotherly likeness of Louise Kenton.

'Well, Captain Danvers,' commenced the detective, cheerfully, 'perhaps you'd like to know all about it, and you, Mr. Whats-yername—what is it now? it used to be Jack Coney when I knew you at—well, we'll let bygones be bygones. It's this way, you see, Captain; Captain Murdell here had an idea you were putting a plant on Mr. Tysdall, whom we took care to leave safe in Chester, so me and Bill here'—pointing with his thumb to the now thoroughly sober and sedate 'city snob'—'was put on to you, and you see we have nailed the two of ye.'

'In what?' blurted out Mockridge, casting at me a glance of ferocious hate, poisonous to contemplate.

'Card-sharping. Be witness to this, Captain Murdell, if you

please; and he ran his finger lightly down the broad stripes on the trowsers of both the swindlers, displaying a whole series of dexterously-concealed little pockets, each containing a well-sorted selection of winning cards. Danvers sat still and pale and made no sign. He seemed instinctively to know there was more beyond all this.

'How, in the name of the dickens, did you find the "pits" out?' asked Mockridge.

'I didn't, but Dr. Kenton there did—he's only day-blind, you see.'

'Kenton! the devil!' gasped out Danvers, actually shivering as he devoured with his eyes the man he thought long dead.

'No, not the devil; only Stanley Kenton, at your service; 'in a calm, measured voice; 'Stanley Kenton, the brother of Miss Louise Kenton who had the misfortune to cross your foul path, and whose life and happiness you did your best to mar and deface, like the imp of Satan you are—Stanley Kenton, whom you thought dead, you cowardly cur—Stanley Kenton, who, if you were worth good powder and lead, would shoot you, blind though he may be, as he would a mangy pariah dog! Stanley——'

'Steady, steady, Dr. Kenton—allow me to deal with this party if you please,' interrupted the detective, as Danvers cowered and shook, while large drops of perspiration broke out upon the ghastly, hard, blood-stained face. 'You see your game's quite up, Danvers; I've had my eye on you this long time, and could lay hold of enough evidence nearly to get you a "lifer." Well, we won't be hard on you this time, either—it would be a pity to lock up so fine a gentleman, and your talents will stand you a good service in America or Australia'—Danvers seemed to revive a little, and Mockridge listened intently—'Australia I'd advise. The Yankees might be too 'cute for you; besides, they have an awkward habit connected with the tar and feather trade—yes, the Colonies is your best find, and perhaps——'

Stanley Kenton broke in impatiently:

'Those letters—it's the letters I want, and then you may go to the deuce your own way—have you those letters now, or not?'

'I have. D--n them, I have! and may my---'

'Now then, no more of that—if you give up them letters I daresay neither Dr. Kenton, nor Captain Murdell, nor nobody will think it worth the bother of prosecuting you; 'and the detective carefully and guardedly watched Danvers fumbling in his breast-pocket.

'There!' hissed through his lips as he pulled out a large leather case, 'there; and give them to that baby-faced idiot with my

blessing; 'and a demonlike grin of impotent hate illuminated the white face as the pearly teeth seemed to gnash out the words. Kenton eagerly grasped the case, calling to me to count the number of letters, and see that they were really Miss Kenton's.

'And as for you,' went on the detective, 'Mr. Jack Coney with an alias, I'll let you go this time——'

'You'd better, by heavens! I'd like to see you haul me up, when you have let that funking cur off for a bundle of woman's letters!'

'Oh, we won't haul you up "these races;" but remember I'm pretty "fly" to your line, and if you'll take a fool's advice you'll make yourself scarce for awhile. And now, gentlemen, have you got what you want? We're getting near Camden, and perhaps it will be well to let these pretty birds get out at the ticket platform.'

Just before the train drew up at the station, the detectives relieved the two wretched swindlers of exactly the amount they had won during the journey, and cautiously watched them, not taking their eyes off them until out of sight.

The look of ineffable hate Danvers cast back at Kenton and myself, ere he passed into the gathering gloom of night, I shall never forget; nor shall I forget to my dying day the joyful, tearful glance accompanying the words with which Louise Kenton thanked me as I handed her the bundle of letters—while again the hot blood surged tumultuously over the lovely face.

Tysdall was easily satisfied that he had been left at Chester by accident; he never, to my knowledge, knew of the unhappy Danvers' affair, and shortly afterwards his brief span of married happiness commenced.

# The Unknown Poetry of Edgar Poe.

BY JOHN H. INGRAM.

THE mental struggles which frequently beset the editor of a deceased writer's unknown works in the present instance, fortunately, could not arise. The desire of making public the literary remains of one whose name and fame have become the world's property does not, in this case, conflict with that duty to the dead which should restrain from publication posthumous writings calculated to detract from their author's reputation. Apart from the belief that a portion at least of the unknown poetry of Poe, now first brought to light, is as meritorious as some of the known pieces, there is the fact to rely on that it was printed for publication by its author, and only suppressed through circumstances of a private nature -through private circumstances which can no longer affect any one. The 1845 edition of Poe's poems was the last collection published during their author's lifetime, and, although many of his early pieces were omitted from it, there does not appear to be any reason for supposing that he would have objected to the republication of the remainder, as long as they were circulated as they were written, and devoid of the 'improvements' which some of his compositions were subjected to whilst going 'the rounds of the press.' The appearance, moreover, of the following verse will have the advantage of confuting one of those reckless charges made by a follower of Griswold, that it was 'mendacious' of Poe to assert that he had printed the volume whence it is now extracted.

This—Edgar Poe's first book—was printed, although not published, in Boston, in 1827. It is entitled 'Tamerlane and other Poems,' and contains only forty pages. The title-page is graced by a couplet from Cowper—

Young heads are giddy and young hearts are warm, And make mistakes for manhood to reform.

From the Preface to the little volume thus modestly heralded, is learned that its contents were chiefly written in the years 1821-2, when the author had not completed his fourteenth year. 'They

were not, of course,' he remarks, 'intended for publication, and why they are now published concerns no one but himself.' He deems that 'the smaller pieces, perhaps, savour too much of egotism; but they were written,' he adds, 'by one too young to have any knowledge of the world but from his own breast.' 'In "Tamerlane," the boy-poet tells us, 'he has endeavoured to expose the folly of even risking the best feelings of the heart at the shrine of Ambition. He is conscious that in this there are many faults [besides that of the general character of the poem], which he flatters himself he could, with little trouble, have corrected, but, unlike many of his predecessors, has been too fond of his early productions to amend them in his old age.' In conclusion, 'he will not say that he is indifferent as to the success of these poems-it might stimulate him to other attempts—but he can safely assert that failure will not at all influence him in a resolution already adopted. This is challenging criticism,' he confesses; but adds, 'let it be so. Nos hæc novimus esse nihil'—an assertion, it may be remarked, he lived to prove the falsity of.

Besides 'Tamerlane,' which occupies seventeen pages of this booklet, there are nine 'Fugitive Pieces': three of these are reprinted, nearly verbatim, in the current collections, and another, in a somewhat altered style, reappeared in the rare edition of 1829. As even the revised copy of this poem is almost unknown to general readers, the original version of it is given here, together with the remaining five pieces, which will be quite new to the world, the little volume containing them having hitherto escaped the most diligent search of bibliographists and admirers of Poe. At that period of his life in which these poems were written, their youthful author was strongly influenced by Byronism, and 'Tamerlane,' as, indeed, Hannay pointed out, shows traces of This influence is even more marked in the little book before us than in the 1829 volume, of which all the later editions, save that of 1831, are reprints. This unknown original is, indeed, very different in many respects from the later 'Tamerlane,' into which several new passages have been interpolated, and from which many other passages have been omitted. The variations between the two copies are so numerous and so lengthy that little less than the entire republication of the first draft would suffice to show them all, and as that is, of course, out of the question here, we purpose to cite only the most interesting of the omissions. Different in structure, and explaining some things which, in later copies, are left to the imagination, the 'Tamerlane' of 1827, is, however, in many parts quite equal to the present poem. Eleven explanatory notes. suppressed in all subsequent editions, are given to the chief poem.

but only the first and fifth of them call for notice. In the first note, Poe says that very little is really known of Tamerlane's history, and with that little I have taken the full liberty of a poet... How I shall account for giving him a friar as a death-bed confessor, I cannot exactly determine. He wanted some one to listen to his tale—and why not a friar? It does not pass the bounds of possibility—quite sufficient for my purpose—and I have, at least, good authority on my side for such innovation.

Details of the slight plot of this poem are almost needless. Tamerlane, lord of half the known world, is on his death-bed. Before his troubled spirit can pass away he longs to disburden his mind of its weight of woe, and, accordingly, sends for a friar, and confesses to him the story of his life. Now, when the world is at his feet, he forgets all his projects of empire and visions of glory, and has but for

'Memory's eye
One object—and but one'—

the ideal of his bygone boyhood:

- 'Tis not to thee that I should name—
  Thou can'st not, would'st not dare to think
  The magic empire of a flame
  Which ev'n upon this perilous brink
  Hath fixed my soul, though unforgiven
  By what it lost for passion—Heaven!
  I loved.
- 'I loved her as an angel might With ray of the all living light Which blazes upon Edis' shrine. It is not surely sin to name, With such as mine—that mystic flame— I had no being but in thee! The world with all its train of bright And happy beauty [for to me All was an undefined delight], The world—its joys—its share of pain, Which I felt not, its bodied forms Of varied being, which contain The bodiless spirits of the storms, The sunshine and the calm—the ideal And fleeting vanities of dreams. Fearfully beautiful! The real Nothings of mid-day waking life-

Of an enchanted life, which seems, Now as I look back, the strife Of some ill demon, with a power Which left me in an evil hour, All that I felt, or saw, or thought, Crowding, confused became [With thine unearthly beauty fraught] Thou—and the nothing of a name. The passionate spirit which hath known, And deeply felt the silent tone Of its own self-supremacy-I speak thus openly to thee, 'Twere folly now to veil a thought With which this aching breast is fraught] The soul which feels its innate right— The mystic empire and high power Given by the energetic might Of Genius at its natal hour: Which knows [believe me at this time, When falsehood were a ten-fold crime, There is a power in the high spirit To know the fate it will inherit, The soul, which knows such power, will still Find *Pride* the ruler of its will. Yes! I was proud—and ye who know The magic of that meaning word, So oft perverted, will bestow Your scorn, perhaps, when ye have heard That the proud spirit had been broken, The proud heart burst in agony At one upbraiding word or token Of her, that heart's idolatry.— I was ambitious.

In her eyes
I read [perhaps too carelessly]
A mingled feeling with my own;
The flush on her bright cheek, to me,
Seemed to become a queenly throne.

Then—in that hour—a thought came o'er My mind, it had not known before;
To leave her while we both were young—
To follow my high fate among
The strife of nations, and redeem

The idle words, which, as a dream Now sounded to her heedless ear— I held no doubt—I knew no fear Of peril in my wild career; To gain an empire, and throw down-As nuptial dowry—a queen's crown. The only feeling which possest, With her own image, my fond breast-Who, that had known the secret thought Of a young peasant's bosom then, Had deemed him, in compassion, aught But one whom phantasy had led Astray from reason. Among men Ambition is chained down—nor fed As in the desert, where the grand, The wild, the beautiful conspire With their own breath to fan its fire? With thoughts such feeling can command; Unchecked by sarcasm and scorn Of those, who hardly will conceive That any should become "great," born In their own sphere—will not believe That they shall stoop in life to one Whom daily they are wont to see Familiarly—whom Fortune's sun Hath ne'er shone dazzlingly upon, Lowly—and of their own degree.'

The idea which Poe here enunciates in verse, of those

'who hardly will conceive That any should become "great," born In their own sphere,'

he explains still further in a very characteristic note; it is too idiosyncratic of its author to be ignored. He remarks that 'it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to make the generality of mankind believe that one, with whom they are upon terms of intimacy, shall be called in the world a "great man." The reason is evident. There are few great men. Their actions are constantly viewed by the mass of people through the medium of distance. The prominent parts of their character are alone noted; and those properties which are minute and common to every one, not being observed, seem to have no connection with a great character. Who ever read the private memorials, correspondence, &c., which have become

so common in our time,' demands the astute lad, 'without wondering that "great men" should act and think "so abominably"?' Returning to 'Tamerlane,' the suppressed edition continues:

'I pictured to my fancy's eye Her silent deep astonishment, When, a few fleeting years gone by For short the time my high hope lent To its most desperate intent], She might recall in him whom Fame Had gilded with a conqueror's name With glory—such as might inspire, Perforce, a passing thought of one Whom she had deemed in his own fire Withered and blasted; who had gone A traitor, violate of the truth So plighted in his early youth], Her own Alexis, who should plight The love he plighted then—again, And raise his infancy's delight The bride and queen of Tamerlane.

'One noon of a bright summer's day I passed from out the matted bower Where in a deep still slumber lay My Ada. In that peaceful hour, A silent gaze was my farewell. I had no other solace—then T'awake her, and a falsehood tell Of a feigned journey, were again To trust the weakness of my heart To her soft thrilling voice. To part Thus, haply, while in sleep she dreamed Of long delight, nor yet had deemed, Awake, that I had held a thought Of parting, were with madness fraught; I knew not woman's heart, alas! Though loved, and loving—let it pass. I went from out the matted bower, And hurried madly on my way: And felt, with ev'ry flying hour That bore me from my home, more gay; There is of earth an agony Which, ideal, still may be

The worst ill of mortality. 'Tis bliss, in its own reality, Too real, to his breast who lives Not within himself, but gives A portion of his willing soul To God, and to the great whole-To him, whose loving spirit will dwell With Nature, in her wild paths; tell Of her wondrous ways and telling, bless Her overpowering loveliness! A more than agony to him Whose failing sight will grow dim With its own living gaze upon That loveliness around: the sun---The blue sky—the misty light Of the pale cloud therein, whose hue Is grace to its heavenly bed of blue; Dim! though looking on all bright! O God! when thoughts that may not pass Will burst upon him, and, alas! For the flight on earth to Fancy given There are no words—unless of Heaven.

When Fortune marked me for her own, And my proud heart had reached a throne It boots me not, good friar, to tell A tale the world but knows too well, How by what hidden deeds of might I clambered to the tottering height, I still was young; and well I ween My spirit what it e'er had been. My eyes were still on pomp and power, My wildered heart was far away, In valleys of the wild Taglay, In mine own Ada's matted bower. I dwelt not long in Samarcand Ere, in a peasant's lowly guise, I sought my long abandoned land: In sunset did its mountains rise In dusky grandeur to my eyes. I reached my home—my home no more----For all was flown that made it so-I passed from out its mossy door In vacant idleness of woe.

There met me on its threshold stone A mountain hunter I had known In childhood, but he knew me not. Something he spoke of the old cot: It had seen better days, he said; There rose a fountain once, and there Full many a fair flower raised its head: But she who reared them was long dead, And in such follies had no part. What was there left me now? despair—A kingdom for a broken heart.'

The 'Fugitive Pieces' which follow 'Tamerlane' call for little comment. They are all more or less strongly tinged with the same cast of thought which from first to last distinguished their author. The verses entitled 'Evening Star,' and the lines beginning 'The happiest day,' are perhaps too indicative of the influence of the boy's contemporaries, and too crude to be of any remarkable value; but the attention of Poe's admirers may be confidently claimed for the other four as not only illustrative of his mental history, but as poems of real worth. These are they:

#### DREAMS.

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream! My spirit not awakening till the beam Of an eternity should bring the morrow. Yes! though that long dream were of hopeless sorrow, 'Twere better than the cold reality Of waking life, to him whose heart must be, And hath been still, upon the lovely earth, A chaos of deep passion, from his birth. But should it be—that dream eternally Continuing—as dreams have been to me In my young boyhood—should it thus be given, 'Twere folly still to hope for higher heaven. For I have revelled, when the sun was bright I' the summer sky, in dreams of living light And loveliness—have left my very heart In climes of mine imagining apart From mine own home, with beings that have been Of mine own thought—what more could I have seen? 'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour From my remembrance shall not pass—some power

Or spell had bound me—'twas the chilly wind Came o'er me in the night, and left behind Its image on my spirit; or the moon Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon Too coldly, or the stars; however it was, That dream was as that night wind—let it pass. I have been happy, though in a dream. I have been happy, and I love the theme: Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife Of semblance with reality, which brings To the delirious eye more lovely things Of Paradise and Love—and all our own!— Than young Hope in his sunniest days hath known.

### VISIT OF THE DEAD.

Thy soul shall find itself alone— Alone of all on earth—unknown The cause; but none are near to pry Into thine hour of secresy. Be silent in that solitude. Which is not loneliness—for then The spirits of the dead, who stood In life before thee, are again In death around thee, and their will Shall then o'ershadow thee—be still: For the night, though clear, shall frown; And the stars shall not look down From their thrones in the dark heaven With light like Hope to mortals given; But their red orbs, without beam, To thy withering heart shall seem As a burning, and a fever Which would cling to thee for ever. But 'twill leave thee, as each star In the morning light afar Will fly thee—and vanish: But its thought thou can'st not banish The breath of God will be still; And the mist upon the hill By that summer breeze unbroken Shall charm thee—as a token, And a symbol which shall be Secresy in thee.

#### EVENING STAR.

Twas noontide of summer. And mid-time of night; And stars, in their orbits, Shone pale, through the light Of the brighter, pale moon. 'Mid planets her slaves, Herself in the heavens, Her beam on the waves. I gazed awhile On her cold smile: Too cold—too cold for me— There passed, as a shroud, A fleecy cloud, And I turned away to thee, Proud Evening Star, In thy glory afar, And dearer thy beam shall be; For joy to my heart Is the proud part Thou bearest in Heaven at night, And more I admire Thy distant fire, Than that colder, lowly light.

#### IMITATION.

A dark unfathomed tide Of interminable pride-• A mystery and a dream Should my early life seem; I say that dream was fraught With a wild and waking thought Of beings that have been, Which my spirit hath not seen, Had I let them pass me by, With a dreaming eye! Let none of earth inherit That vision on my spirit; Those thoughts I would control, As a spell upon his soul: For that bright hope at last And that light time have past,

And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sigh as it passed on:
I care not though it perish
With a thought I then did cherish.

How often we forget all time, when lone Admiring Nature's universal throne; Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the intense Reply of HERS to OUR intelligence!

1.

In youth I have known one with whom the earth In secret communing held—as he with it, In daylight, and in beauty, from his birth: Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth A passionate light such for his spirit was fit; And yet that spirit knew—not in the hour Of its own fervour—what had o'er it power.

2.

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er,
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sov'reignty than ancient lore
Hath ever told—or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more,
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
As dew of the night-time o'er the summer grass?

3.

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye To the loved object—so the tear to the lid Will start, which lately slept in apathy? And yet it need not be—(that object) hid From us in life—but common—which doth lie Each hour before us—but then only bid With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken T' awake us—'tis a symbol and a token

1

Of what in other worlds shall be—and given In beauty by our God, to those alone Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone, That high tone of the spirit which hath striven Though not with Faith—with godliness—whose throne With desperate energy 't hath beaten down; Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

The happiest day—the happiest hour
My seared and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

Of power! said I? yes! such I ween; But they have vanished long, alas! The visions of my youth have been— But let them pass.

And, pride, what have I now with thee?
Another brow may ev'n inherit
The venom thou hast poured on me—
Be still, my spirit.

The happiest day—the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have even seen,
The brightest glance of pride and power
I feel—have been:

But were that hope of pride and power Now offered, with the pain Ev'n then I felt—that brightest hour I would not live again:

For on its wing was dark alloy, And as it fluttered, fell An essence, powerful to destroy A soul that knew it well.

# The New Kepublic;

OR, CULTURE, FAITH, AND PHILOSOPHY IN AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE.

## BOOK I.—CHAPTER I.

Towards the close of last July, when the London season was fast dying of the dust, Otho Laurence had invited to his cool villa by the sea what the 'Morning Post' called 'a select circle of friends.' This singular retreat was the work of a very singular man, Otho Laurence's uncle, who had spent upon it a large fortune, and had designed it as far as possible to embody his own tastes and charac-He was a member of a Tory family of some note, and had relations in both Houses of Parliament; but he was himself possessed of a deep, though quiet antipathy to the two things generally most cherished by those of his time and order, the ideas of Christianity and Feudalism; and he studiously kept himself clear of all public Next to a bishop, the thing he most disliked was a courtier: next to a courtier, a fox-hunting country gentleman. sympathies were classical or rather late classical. His great wish was that he had been born a Roman noble in the days of Augustus or of the Antonines-he was not quite certain which of these periods to prefer, but he rather inclined to the latter, when he died. But nothing in his life, perhaps, was so characteristic of him as his leaving of it. During his last hours he was soothed by a pretty and somewhat educated housemaid, whom he called Phyllis, and whom he made sit by his bedside, and read aloud to him Gibbon's two Chapters on Christianity. Phyllis had just come to the celebrated excerpt from Tertullian, in which that Father contemplates the future torments of the unbelievers, when the parish clergyman arrived to offer his services. 'How shall I admire'—these were the words that, read in a low sweet tone, first greeted his ears when he was shown softly into the sick chamber how shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, so many fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in a fiercer fire than ever they kindled against the Christians!' The clergyman was at first much reassured at hearing words so edifying; but when he turned to old Mr. Laurence, he was dismayed to see on his pale face, no signs of awe, but only a faint smile, full of sarcastic humour. He therefore glanced at the book that was lying on the girl's lap, and discovered to his horror the work of the infidel historian. He was at first struck dumb; but, soon recovering himself, began to say something suitable at once to his own profession and to the sick man's needs. Mr. Laurence answered him with the greatest courtesy, but with many thanks declined any assistance from him; saying wistfully that he knew he had not long to live, and that his one wish was that he could open his veins in a bath, and so fade gently into death; 'and then,' he added, 'my soul, if I have one, might perhaps be with Petronius, and with Seneca. And yet sleep would, I think, be better than even their company.' The poor clergyman bade a hasty adieu, and Phyllis resumed her reading. Mr. Laurence listened to every word: the smile returned to his lips that had for a moment left them, and was still upon them when, half-an-hour afterwards, he died, so quietly that Phyllis did not perceive it, but continued her reading for some time to ears that could hear nothing. All his property he left to his nephew Otho, including his splendid villa, which was, as it was meant to be, a type of its builder. It was a house of pillars, porticoes, and statues, designed ambitiously in what was meant to be a classical style; and though its splendours might not be all, perhaps, in the best taste, nor even of the most strictly Roman pattern, there was yet an air about its somewhat meretricious stateliness by which the days of the Roman Empire were at once suggested to one. was just the place, indeed, that would have enraptured Statius; and in its cool rooms and green gardens, Vopiscus might have passed peacefully his

Pierian days, and slumbers sweet with song.1

¹ The present writer has so little skill in describing fine houses, that he would have been here completely at a loss, had not a fashionable lady novelist who knew the one in question—having been in fact the daughter of the housekeeper there—come to his assistance, and dictated the following description to him; which, owing to a slight difference in the style, he has been unable to incorporate into the text. 'There above the sea, and overlooking it, with the everlasting sea-breeze in its Parian porticoes, stood the villa, of which a Roman noble might have been proud—in which a Lucullus might have feasted, or a Clodius wreathed the brows of Aspasia with rosepetals. Laurence's Folly the simple country folk termed it; and folly perhaps it was, but a splendid folly, and one of which none but a patrician, whose blood beat blue from the heart to the taper finger-tips, could have been ever guilty. Its lofty pillared halls with their tesselated floors—work of cunning artists from over sea—struck dumb with awed amazement such of the favoured country squires as had occasional access to them, with their buxom wives decked in their best apparel, and their

Otho Laurence inherited with his uncle's house something of the tastes and feelings of which it was the embodiment. a graceful scholar, a connoisseur in ancient art, and he was an epicurean by training and by temper. But he had been open to other influences also. He had at one time of his life experienced religion, and the account he was given of his uncle's death-bed plunged him in the deepest melancholy. In this way his view of things was widened, and his whole nature penetrated with a subdued but deep anxiety. He thought and read much upon many subjects; he dabbled in many kinds of accomplishments. His moods varied from cynical to sentimental, his philosophies from positive to mystical. At twenty-four he felt that he ought to have a mission in life, but he could find none that would suit him. He had considerable natural powers, and was in many ways a remarkable man; but, unhappily, one of those who are remarkable because they do not become famous, not because they do. was one of those of whom it is said till they are thirty, that they will do something; till they are thirty-five, that they might do something if they chose; and after that, that they might have done anything if they had chosen. Laurence was as yet only three years gone in the second stage, but such of his friends as were ambitious for him feared that three years more would find him landed in the third. He, too, was beginning to share this fear; and, not being humble enough to despair of himself, was by this time taking to despair of his century. He was thus hardly a

daughters arrayed in the flimsy fashion of the neighbouring town. Rare exotics glowing in marble vases perfumed the air; exquisite frescoes on the wall caught the eye. Greek statues, in their mute immortal loveliness, rested calmly upon their granite plinths. In the libraries and drawing-rooms stood cabinets full of priceless antiquities, any one of which would have dowered an Earl's daughter. Jars and vases from China and Japan, Roman hand-mirrors, in which Faustina had perhaps surveyed her more than human loveliness, iridescent phials of glass, in which Locusta had perhaps stored her poisons, luxurious couches, some covered with purple velvet, some with crimson, inlaid tables, paintings, marbles, bronzes by immortal masters----' The lady who had once helped to make an inventory of the chief valuables in the house, went on to repeat, in a more coloured form, as much of it as she recollected. She then proceeded: 'Here, in this superb retirement, dwelt Otho Laurence, the celebrated epicurean of modern society—here seeking retirement from the caresses of the selectest circles in London, in a yet selecter circle of his own. All day long, through his gilded rooms, sounds of soft music stole; and dainty-footed Circassian girls, and stealthy Odalisques, looking like strayed houris from Paradise \_\_\_\_\_' The author here interposed to tell her that Otho Laurence was not at all such a man as she described, nor in the least given to such company. She immediately, seeing one road barred, started off with fresh alacrity on another: 'Often on the broad terrace outside, during the long summer evenings, haughty and titled groups of the English Aristocracy watched the crimson after-glow die away over the long horizon. Here it was that Ivo de Grantmesnil, a scion of one of the proudest English houses, which had thrice refused a peerage that had been laid at its feet--- But our friend had automatically begun a novel, with which we are not concerned at this moment.

happy man; but, like many unhappy men, he was capable of keen enjoyments. Chief amongst these was society in certain peculiar forms; the favourite form being a party in his own house, such as that which he had now assembled there. From this one in particular he looked forward to getting special pleasure; partly from the combination of the various guests, but chiefly because amongst these was to be his friend Robert Leslie, who had been living abroad, and whom he had not seen for two years.

Laurence's aunt, Lady Grace, helped to receive the guests. It was on a Saturday that they arrived, and they were to disperse again on Monday. Several carriages had been busy between the house and the station the whole afternoon. Robert Leslie appeared last of all, after the dressing-bell had done ringing. The others had gone upstairs; but he found Laurence in the library, sitting with his head on his hand, and a pile of menu cards on the desk before him. The two friends met, with much warmth, and then looked at each other a little, to see if either had changed. In appearance they were a contrast. Laurence had fair hair, bluish-grey eyes, and a smooth face, which but for a firm keen mouth and massive chin would have looked feminine. He was tall, with an elegant figure, and a carriage slightly languid. Leslie, on the other hand, was dark, with a worn face, and an expression, in repose, that was not unlike a sneer; but his smile was peculiarly soft, and when he laughed he laughed with his eyes, rather than with his mouth.

'You told me you had been ill,' said Laurence, having looked at Leslie for a moment, 'and I am afraid you don't seem quite well yet.'

'You forget,' said Leslie, 'that I was on the sea six hours ago; and, as you know, I am a wretched sailor. But the worst of human maladies are the most transient also—love that is half despairing, and sea-sickness that is quite so.'

'I congratulate you,' said Laurence, again examining his friend's face, 'on your true cynical manner. I often thought we might have masters in cynicism just as we have masters in singing. Perhaps I shall be able to learn the art from you.'

'Oh!' said Leslie, 'the theory is simple enough. Find out, by a little suffering, what are the things you hold most sacred, and most firmly believe in, and, whenever an occasion offers, deny your faith. A cynic is a kind of inverted confessor, perpetually making enemies for the sake of what he knows to be false.'

'Ah!' said Laurence, 'but I don't want theory. I know what is sacred quite as well as you, and, when I am beast enough to be quite out of tune with it, I have the good sense to call it a

phantom. But I don't do this with sufficient energy. It is skill in cynical practice I want—a lesson in the pungent manner—the bitter tone——'

'Then please not to take your lessons from me,' said Leslie. 'Imitation may be the sincerest flattery, but it is, of all, the most irritating: and a cynic, as you are good enough to call me, feels this especially. For a cynic is the one preacher, remember, that never wants to make converts. His aim is to outrage, not to convince: to create enemies, not to conquer them. The peculiar charm that his creed has for him, is his own peculiarity in holding it. He is an acid that can only fizz with an alkali, and he therefore hates in others what he most admires in himself. So if you hear me say a bitter thing, please be good enough to brim over immediately with the milk of human kindness. If I say anything disrespectful about friendship, please be good enough to look hurt; and if I happen to say—what is the chief part of the cynic's stock-in-trade-that no woman was ever sincere or faithful, I trust you have some lady amongst your visitors who will look at me with mournful eyes, and say to me, "Ah, if you did but know!"

'Well,' said Laurence, 'perhaps I have; but, talking of what people are to say, I have something here about which I want you to help me. You see these cards; they are all double. Now that second half is for something quite new, and of my own invention. The cook has written his part already, so you need not look so alarmed; but he has only provided for the tongue as a tasting instrument; I am going to provide for it as a talking one. fact I am going to have a menu for the conversation, and to this I shall make every one strictly adhere. For it has always seemed absurd to me to be so careful about what we put into our mouths, and to leave chance to arrange what comes out of them; to be so particular as to the order of what we eat, and to have no order at all in what we talk about. This is the case especially in parties like the present, where most of the people know each other only a little, and if left to themselves would never touch on the topics that would make them best acquainted, and best bring out their several personal flavours. That is what I like to see conversation doing. I ought to have written these menus before; but I have been busy all day, and, besides, I wanted you to help me. I was just beginning without you when you arrived, as I could wait no longer, but I have put down nothing vet: indeed I could not fix upon the first topic that is to correspond with the soup—the first vernal breath of discussion that is to open the buds of the shy and strange souls. So come, now-what shall we begin with?

What we want is something that any one can talk easily about, whether he knows anything of it or not—something, too, that may be treated in any way, either with laughter, feeling, or even a little touch of temper.'

'Love,' suggested Leslie.

'That is too strong to begin with,' said Laurence, 'and too real. Besides, introduced in that way, it would be, I think, rather common and vulgar. No—the only thing that suggested itself to me was religion.'

'Nothing could be better in some ways,' said Leslie; 'but might not that, too, be rather strong meat for some? I apprehend, like Bottom, that "the ladies might be afeard of the lion." I should suggest rather the question, "Are you High-church or Low-church?" There is something in that which at once disarms reverence, and may also just titillate the interest, the temper, or the sense of humour. Quick,' he said, taking one of the cards, 'and let us begin to write.'

'Stop,' said Laurence; 'not so fast, let me beg of you. Instead of religion, or anything connected with it, we will have "What is the Aim of Life?" Is not this the thing of things to suit us? About what do we know less or talk more? There is a Sphinx in each of our souls that is always asking us this riddle; and when we are lazy or disappointed, we all of us lounge up to her, and make languid guesses. So about this we shall all of us have plenty to say, and can say it in any way we like, flippant, serious, or sentimental. Think, too, how many avenues of thought and feeling it opens up! Evidently the Aim of Life is the thing to begin with.'

Leslie assented; and before many minutes they had made the menu complete.

The 'Aim of Life' was to be followed by 'Town and Country,' which was designed to introduce a discussion as to where the Aim of Life was to be best attained. After this, by an easy transition, came 'Society;' next by way of entrées, 'Art and Literature,' 'Love and Money,' 'Riches and Civilisation;' then 'The Present,' as something solid and satisfying; and lastly, a light superfluity to dally with, brightly coloured and unsubstantial, with the entremets came 'The Future.'

'And who is here,' said Leslie, as they were ending their labours, 'to enjoy this feast of reason?'

'I will tell you,' said Laurence. 'In the first place, there is Lady Ambrose, a woman of a very old but poor family, who has married a modern M.P. with more than a million of money. She is very particular about knowing the right people, and has lovely,

large grey eyes. Then there is Miss Merton, a Roman Catholic young lady, the daughter of old Sir Ascot Merton, the horse-racing evangelical. I knew her well five years ago, but had not seen her since her conversion, till to-day. Then we have Dr. Jenkinson, the great Broad-church divine who thinks that Christianity is not dead, but changed by himself and his followers in the twinkling of an eye.

'I met Dr. Jenkinson,' said Leslie, 'just before I went abroad, at a great dinner given by Baron Isaacs, in honour of his horse

having won the Derby. Well-and who else is there?'

'Two celebrated members of the Royal Society,' said Laurence; 'no less persons than——But, good gracious! it is time we were upstairs dressing. Come along directly, and I will explain the other people to you before dinner.'

## CHAPTER II.

Ir was half-past eight, and the party were fast assembling in the twilight drawing-room; Leslie was lounging in one of the windows, by a large stand of flowers and broad-leaved plants, and was studying the company with considerable interest. His first impression was of little more than of a number of men's dark coats and white shirt-fronts, tables, couches, and gilded chairs, and the pleasant many-coloured glimmerings of feminine apparel. But before long he had observed more minutely. There were men who he instinctively felt were celebrities, discoursing to groups of young ladies; there were ladies who he at once saw were attractive, being discoursed to by groups of men. He very soon detected Lady Ambrose, a fine handsome woman of about seven-and-twenty, with the large grey eyes of which Laurence had spoken, and a very clear complexion. Leslie was much prepossessed by her frank expression and manner, and by her charming voice, as she was talking with some animation to a tall distinguished-looking young man, whose fine features, keen earnest eyes, and thoughtful expression prepossessed him still more. Forming a third in this group, dropping in a word or two at intervals, he recognised the celebrated Dr. Jenkinson-still full of vigour, though his hair was silver—the sharp and restless sparkle of whose eyes, strangely joined with the most benevolent of smiles, Leslie remembered to have noticed at Baron Isaacs's festival. He had just identified Lady Ambrose and the Doctor, when Laurence came up to him in the window, and began to tell him who was who.

'Dr. Jenkinson is the only one I know,' said Leslie, 'and, naturally enough, he forgets me.'

'Well,' said Laurence, 'that man by himself, turning over the books on the table—the man with the black whiskers, spectacles, and bushy evebrows—is Mr. Storks of the Royal Society, who is great on the physical basis of life, and the imaginative basis of God. The man with long locks in the window, explaining a microscope in so eager a way to that dark-haired girl, is the great Professor Stockton-of the Royal Society also; and member and president of many Societies more. The girl-child, rather, I ought to call her—that he is talking to, is Lady Violet Gresham—my second cousin. You see my aunt, the old lady with grey curls, on the ottoman near the fire-place? Well—the supercilious-looking man, talking rather loudly and rather slowly to her about the dust in London, is Mr. Luke, the great critic and apostle of culture. That, too, is another critic close by him—the pale creature, with large moustache, looking out of the window at the sunset. He is Mr. Rose, the pre-Raphaelite. He always speaks in an undertone. and his two topics are self-indulgence and art.'

'And who is that,' said Leslie, 'the young lady with those large and rather sad-looking eyes, and the delicate, proud mouth?' Which?' said Lawrence.

'The one on the sofa,' said Leslie, 'who looks so like a Reynolds's portrait—like a duchess of the last century—the lady in the pale blue dress, talking to the old man with a beard?'

'That,' said Laurence, 'is Miss Merton. I am glad you admire her. And don't you know who it is she is talking to? He is almost the only man of these days for whom I feel real reverence-almost the only one of our teachers who speaks with the least breath of inspiration. But, as the years come, it seems that hope is leaving him, and in company he is generally sad and silent. That is Rokeby! The young man there, with Lady Ambrose and Dr. Jenkinson, is Lord Allen. He is only two or three and twenty; still, had you been in England lately, you would often have heard his name. He has come early into an immense property, and he yet feels that he has duties in life. too,' said Laurence, sighing, 'sees that he has fallen on evil days, that there is no peace, that we must prepare ourselves for a bitter battle, and that the enemies we wrestle against are not flesh and blood, but the spiritual darkness of this world. However-that red-headed youth thinks very differently. He is Mr. Saunders from Oxford, supposed to be very clever and advanced. Next him is Donald Gordon, who has deserted deer-stalking and the Kirk, for literature and German metaphysics.'

'And who is that, at the far end of the room,' said Leslie, 'surrounded by a circle of young ladies?'

'Ah!' said Laurence, 'how is it I forgot him? That is Herbert. I almost class him with Rokeby, I think, in my feelings for him.

But he is too impressionable, perhaps—a little like me.'

'Herbert!' exclaimed Leslie, 'so it is. I thought I recollected the face. I have often heard him lecture at the Royal Institution, and he has held the whole theatre breathless with that strange voice of his. I never heard a man speak who had the same consummate mastery of words and—but, ah!—my dear Laurence—who is this, that is coming into the room now—this lovely creature, with a dress like a red azalea? What speaking eyes! And what hair too—deep dead black, with those white starry blossoms in it. I don't think I ever saw any one move so gracefully: and how proudly and piquantly she poises

On her neck the small head buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed!'

'That,' said Laurence, when Leslie had done, 'is Mrs. Sinclair, who has published a volume of poems, and is a sort of fashionable London Sappho. But come,—we shall be going into dinner directly. You shall have Lady Ambrose on one side of you, and shall take in Miss Merton.'

### CHAPTER III.

LAURENCE, though he had forewarned his guests of his menu before they left the drawing-room, yet felt a little anxious when they sat down to dinner; for he found it not altogether easy to get the conversation started. Lady Ambrose, who was the first to speak, began somewhat off the point.

'What a charming change it is, Mr. Laurence,' she said, 'to look out on the sea when one is dressing, instead of across South

Audley Street!'

'Hush!' said Laurence, softly, with a grave, reproving smile.

'Really,' said Lady Ambrose, 'I beg your pardon. I thought

Dr. Jenkinson had said grace.'

'If he has,' said Laurence, 'it is very good of him, for I am afraid he was not asked. But what I mean is, that you must only talk of what is on the cards, so be good enough to look at your menu, and devote your attention to the Aim of Life.'

'Really, this is much too alarming,' said Lady Ambrose. 'How is one to talk at so short a notice on a subject one has never thought

about before?'

'Why, to do so,' said Laurence, 'is the very art of conversation; for in that way, one's ideas spring up fresh like young roses that have all the dew on them, instead of having been kept drying for half a lifetime between the leaves of a book. So do set a good

example, and begin, or else we shall never be started at all; and my pet plan will turn out a fiasco.'

There was, indeed, as Laurence said this, something very near complete silence all round the table. It was soon broken.

'Are you High-church or Low-church?' was a question suddenly uttered in a quick eager girl's voice, by Miss Prattle, a young lady of eighteen, to the astonishment of the whole company. It was

addressed to Dr. Jenkinson who was sitting next her.

Had a pin been run into the Doctor's leg, he could not have looked more astounded, or given a greater start. He eyed his fair questioner for some time in complete silence.

'Can you tell me the difference?' he said at last, in a voice of considerable good humour, yet with just a touch of sharpness in it.

'I think,' said Miss Merton, who was sitting on the other side of him, 'that my card is a little different. I have "the Aim of Life" on mine, and so I believe has everybody else.'

'Well,' said the Doctor laughing, 'let us ask Miss Prattle what is her aim in life.'

'Thank Heaven,' said Laurence, 'Dr. Jenkinson has begun. I hope we shall all now follow.'

Laurence's hope was not in vain. The conversation soon sprang up everywhere; and the company, though in various humours, took most of them very kindly to the solemn topic that had been put before them. Several of the young ladies looked sentimental; Mrs. Sinclair was seen slightly shrugging her shoulders at one or two of her own observations; Mr. Luke, who was sitting next her, was heard in a loudish voice saying that his own favourite Muse had always been Erato; Mr. Rose had taken a crimson flower from a vase on the table, and, looking at it himself with a grave regard, was pointing out its infinite and passionate beauties to the lady next him; and Mr. Stockton was explaining that the Alps looked grander, and the sky bluer, than ever to those who truly realised the atomic theory. No one, indeed, was silent except Mr. Herbert, Mr. Rokeby, and Mr. Storks, of whom the two former smiled rather sadly, whilst the latter looked about him with an inquisitorial frown.

Laurence was delighted with this state of things, and surveyed the table with great satisfaction. Whilst his attention was thus engaged, Lady Ambrose turned to Leslie, and asked him if he had been in town much this season. She was taken with his look, and wanted to find out something about him.

'Really,' interposed Laurence, pleadingly, 'do try and keep to the point—please, Lady Ambrose.'

'I want to find out Mr. Leslie's aim in life by asking him where he has been,' she answered.

'I have been in a great many places,' said Leslie, 'but not to pursue any end—only to try and forget that I had no end to

pursue.'

'This is a very sad state of things,' said Lady Ambrose; 'I can always find something to do, except when I am quite alone, or in the country when the house is empty. And even then I can make occupation. I draw, or read a book, or teach my little boy some lessons. But come—what do you think is the real aim of life? Since that is what I must ask him, is it not, Mr. Laurence?'

'Don't ask me, 'said Leslie; 'I told you I hadn't a notion; and

I don't suppose we any of us have.'

'That can't be true,' said Lady Ambrose, 'for just listen how every one is talking. I wish we could hear what they are saying. You might learn something then, perhaps, Mr. Leslie, since you are so very ignorant.'

It happened that, as Lady Ambrose said this, the conversation suddenly flagged, and Laurence took advantage of the lull to ask if any satisfactory conclusions had been come to during the past five minutes, 'because we up here,' he said, 'are very much in the

dark, and want to be enlightened.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Storks, gruffly, 'has any one found out what is the aim of life?' As he said this he looked about him defiantly, as though all the others were butterflies, that he could break, if he chose, upon his wheel. His eye at last lit upon Mr. Saunders, who, considering this a challenge to himself, immediately took up the gauntlet. The young man spoke with the utmost composure, and, as his voice was high and piercing, everybody could hear him.

'The aim of life,' he said, adjusting his spectacles, 'is

progress.'

'What is progress?' interrupted Dr. Jenkinson, very sharply, and without looking at Mr. Saunders.

'Progress,' replied Mr. Saunders, slowly, 'has been found, like

poetry, very hard to define.'

'Very true,' said the Doctor, drily, and looking straight before him.

'But I,' continued Mr. Saunders, 'have discovered a definition which will, I think, meet with general acceptance. There is nothing original in it—it is merely an abstract of the meaning of all our great liberal thinkers—progress is such improvement as can be verified by statistics, just as education is such knowledge as can be tested by examinations. That, I conceive, is a very adequate definition of the most advanced conception of progress, and to persuade people in general to accept this, is at present one of the chief duties of all earnest men.'

'Quite true!' said Mr. Herbert, with ironical emphasis; 'I entirely accept your definition as the true one of modern progress.'

Mr. Saunders was delighted, and, imagining he had made a disciple, he turned to Mr. Herbert and went on.

'For just let us,' he said, 'compare a man with a gorilla, and see in what the man's superiority lies. It is evidently not in the man's ideas of God, and so forth—for in his presumable freedom from these the gorilla is the superior of the man—but in the hard and verifiable fact, that the man can build houses and cottonmills, whereas the highest monkey can scarcely make the rudest approach to a hut.'

'But can you tell me,' said Mr. Herbert, 'supposing men some day come to a state in which no more of this progress is possible, what will they do then?'

'Mr. Mill, whom in almost all things I reverence as a supreme authority,' said Mr. Saunders, 'asked himself that very question. But the answer he gave himself was one of the few things in which I venture to dissent from him. For, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed, he thinks the human race is to find its chief enjoyment in reading Wordsworth's poetry.'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Herbert; 'and did Mill come to any conclusion so sane as that?'

'I, on the contrary, believe,' Mr. Saunders went on, 'that as long as the human race lasts, it will still have some belief in God left in it, and that the eradication of this will afford an unending employment to all enlightened minds.'

Leslie looked at Lady Ambrose, expecting to see her smile. On the contrary she was very grave, and said, 'I think this is shocking.'

'Well,' said Laurence in a soothing tone to her, 'it is only the way of these young men in times of change like ours. Besides, he is very young—he has only just left Oxford——'

'If these irreligious views are to be picked up at Oxford,' said Lady Ambrose, 'I shall be obliged to send my little boy, when he grows up, to Cambridge. And as for what you say about "times of change"—I am not a conservative, as you know—indeed I quite go in for reform, as my husband does: but I don't think religion ought to be dragged into the matter.'

'Well,' said Laurence, 'let us listen to what Lord Allen is saying.'

'He is sure,' said Lady Ambrose, 'not to say anything but what is nice.'

Allen was speaking in a low tone, but his voice was so clear

that Lady Ambrose was quite able to hear him. 'The aim of life,' he was saying, blushing a little as he found how many people were listening to him, 'has been, it seems to me, really the same always and for all men.'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Saunders.

'Yes,' said Allen, slightly turning towards him; 'it has been, I think, as a single magnet, acting on all, though upon many by repulsion. It is quite indescribable in words; but our truth to it may be known by two things—a faith in God, and a longing for a future life.'

'Very beautifully put!' murmured Mr. Herbert.

'It has been truly said by the young man,' exclaimed Mr. Rokeby—and the sound of his voice made every one at once a listener—'that the aim of man's life is at present indescribable. Indescribable! In our age it is not so much as thinkable. We do not know it—we cannot even dream of it. We can only in the confused obscure darkness discover painfully the next step to be taken. Our whole philosophy of life has dwindled down to that. And yet here, too, there may be heroism—even the truest—that of patient heroic toil, for which, through the palpable obscure, no hero-crown is discernible.'

"I entirely agree with Rokeby,' said Mr. Herbert, in measured melancholy accents. 'The true significance of life is now utterly hidden from us. The whole human race is now wandering in the wilderness, where there is no hill-top whence the promised land may be seen; and where only a few of the wanderers believe that there is any promised land at all. Or rather, most of them think the wilderness itself a promised land. And they have a God of their own, too, who engages never to lead them out of it, if they will only follow him: who, for visible token of his Godhead, leads them with a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night—the cloud being the black smoke of their factory chimneys, and the fire the glare of their blast furnaces. And so effectual are these modern divine guides, that if we were standing on the brink of Jordan itself, we should be utterly unable to catch, through the fire and the smoke, one single glimpse of the sunlit hills beyond.'

Mr. Herbert said these last words almost fiercely; and they were followed by a complete hush. It was almost directly broken by Mr. Rose.

'To me,' he said, raising his eyebrows wearily, and sending his words floating down the table in a languid monotone, 'Mr. Herbert's whole metaphor seems misleading. I rather look upon life as a chamber, which we decorate as we would decorate the chamber of her or of him we love—tinting the walls of it with

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symphonies of subdued colour, and filling it with works of fair form, and with flowers, and with strange scents, and with instruments of music. And this can be done now as well—better rather—than at any former time: since we know that so many of the old aims were false, and so cease to be distracted by them. We have learned the weariness of creeds; and know that for us the grave has no secrets. We have learned that the aim of life is life; and life consists in the consciousness of exquisite living—in the making our own each highest thrill of joy that the moment offers us—be it some touch of colour on the sea or on the mountains, the early dew in the crimson shadows of a rose, the shining of a woman's limbs in clear water, or——'

A sound of 'Sh!' here broke softly from several mouths. Mr. Rose was slightly disconcerted; and Laurence, to prevent a pause, hastily asked Dr. Jenkinson what his view of the matter was.

- 'Do any of us know what life is?' said the Doctor. 'Hadn't we better find out that first?'
- 'Life,' continued Mr. Rose, who had now recovered himself, 'is a series of moments and emotions.'
- 'And a series of absurdities too, very often,' said Dr. Jenkinson, in his sharpest voice.
  - 'Life is a solemn mystery,' interrupted Mr. Storks, severely.
- 'Life is a d——d nuisance,' muttered Leslie to himself, but just loud enough to be heard by Lady Ambrose, who smiled at him with a sense of humour that won his heart at once.
- 'Life is matter,' Mr. Storks went on, 'which, under certain conditions not yet fully understood, has become self-conscious.'
- 'Lord Allen has just been saying that it is the preface to eternity,' said Mr. Saunders.
- 'Only, unfortunately,' said Laurence, 'it is a preface that we cannot skip, and the dedication is generally made to the wrong person.'
- 'All our doubts on this matter,' said Mr. Saunders, 'are simply due to that dense pestiferous fog of crazed sentiment that still hides our view, but which the present generation has sternly set its face to dispel and conquer. Science will drain the marshy grounds of the human mind, so that the deadly malaria of Christianity, which has already destroyed two civilisations, shall never be fatal 'to a third.'
  - 'I should rather have thought,' said Mrs. Sinclair, in her soft clear voice, and casting down her eyes thoughtfully, 'that passion and feeling were the real heart of the matter: and that religion of some sort was an ingredient in all perfect passion. There are seeds of feeling in every soul, but these will never rise up into

flowers without some culture—will they, Mr. Luke? And this culture is, surely,' she said, dreamily, 'the work of Love who is the gardener of the soul, and of Religion, the under-gardener, acting as Love bids it.'

'Ah, yes!' said Mr. Luke, looking compassionately about him. 'Culture! Mrs. Sinclair is quite right; for without culture we can never understand Christianity, and Christianity, whatever the vulgar may say of it, is the key to life, and is co-extensive with it.'

Lady Ambrose was charmed with this sentiment.

- 'Quite so, Mr. Luke, I quite agree with you,' she said, in her most cordial manner. 'But I wish you would tell me a little more about culture. I am always so much interested in those things.'
- 'Culture,' said Mr. Luke, 'is the union of two things—fastidious taste, and liberal sympathy. These can only be gained by wide reading, guided by sweet reason, which at once enables us to discern the eternal and the absolutely righteous wherever we find it, whether in the gospels or in Aristophanes. It is true that culture sets aside the larger part of the gospels as grotesque, barbarous, and immoral; but what remains, purged of its apparent meaning, it discerns to be a treasure beyond all price. And in Christianity—such Christianity, I mean, as true taste can accept—culture sees the guide to the real significance of life, and the explanation,' Mr. Luke added with a sigh, 'of that melancholy which in our day is attendant upon all clear sight.'

'But why,' said Allen, 'if you know so well what life's mean-

ing is, need you feel this melancholy at all?'

- 'Ah!' said Mr. Luke, 'it is from this very knowledge that the melancholy I speak of springs. We—the cultured—we indeed see. But the world at large does not. It will not listen to us. It thinks we are talking nonsense. Surely that is enough to sadden us. Then, too, our ears are perpetually being pained and deafened by the din of the two opposing Philistinisms—science and orthodoxy—both equally vulgar, and equally useless. But the masses cannot see this. It is impossible to persuade some that science can teach them nothing worth knowing, and others that the dogmatic utterances of the gospels are either ignorant mistakes, or oriental metaphors. Don't you find this, Jenkinson?' he added, addressing the Doctor across the table in a loud mournful voice.
- 'Laurence,' said the Doctor, apparently not hearing the question, 'haven't we talked of this quite long enough? Town and country—let us go on to that; or else we shall be getting very much behindhand.'

These words of the Doctor's caused a rapid change in the con-

versation. It soon ceased to be general, breaking up into a number of private discussions on individual tastes, carried on for the most part in low tones. Where, it was asked, can really the best and noblest life be lived—in cities, or away from them? At first there seemed to be a general sense on all sides that it was a duty to prefer the country. There, the voices of Nature spoke to the soul more freely, the air was purer and fresher; the things in life that were really valuable were more readily taken at their true worth; foolish vanities and trivial cares were less likely to degrade the character; one could have flowers; one could listen to the music of birds and rivers; a country house was more comfortable than a town one, and few prospects were so charming as an English park. But the voice of Mr. Saunders was soon heard proclaiming that progress was almost entirely confined to towns, and that the modern liberal could find little scope for action in the country. 'If he does anything there,' Mr. Saunders said, 'he can only make his tenants more comfortable and contented; and that is simply attaching them more to the existing order of things. Indeed, even now, as matters stand, the healthy rustic, with his fresh complexion and honest eye, is absolutely incapable of appreciating the tyranny of religion and society. But the true liberal is undeceived by his pleasing exterior, and sees a far nobler creature in the pale narrow-chested operative of the city, who at once responds to the faintest cry of insurgence.'

Slight causes often produce large results; and these utterances of Mr. Saunders turned the entire torrent of opinion into a different channel. Mr. Luke, who had a moment before been talking about 'liberal air,' and 'sedged brooks,' and 'meadow grass,' now admitted that one's country neighbours were sure to be narrowminded sectarians, and that it was better to live amongst cultured society, even under a London fog, than to look at all the splendour of provincial sunsets, in company of a parson who could talk of nothing but his parishioners and justification by faith. Others, too, followed in the same direction; and the verdict of the majority soon seemed to be that, except in a large country house, the country itself, though it might be very beautiful, was still very tiresome. But the voice of Mr. Saunders was again heard, during a pause, laying it down that no true liberal could ever care to live in the country now; and Lady Ambrose, who highly disapproved of him and his views in general, saw here a fitting opportunity for contradicting him: asserting that, though she and her husband were both advanced liberals, yet the pleasantest part of their year was that spent upon their moor in Scotland. 'And then, too,' she added, turning to Laurence, 'I am devoted to our place in

Gloucestershire, and I would not miss, for anything, such things as my new dairy, and my cottages, with the old women in them.'

'And yet,' said Laurence, smiling, 'Sir George would never go

near the place if it were not for the shooting.'

'Indeed he would,' said Lady Ambrose, a little indignantly. 'He likes the life so much, and is so fond of his gardens, and greenhouses, and——'

But she was here interrupted by Mr. Herbert, who, mistaking the Sir George Ambrose mentioned for another Baronet of the same name—a gentleman of an ancient Jacobite family, and quite of the old school—broke in as follows, somewhat to the consternation of Lady Ambrose, whose husband was a great cotton-spinner of the most mysterious origin.

'Sir George,' he said, 'is, as I know well, an entirely honest gentleman of ancient lineage. He is indeed a perfectly beautiful type of what the English Squire properly ought to be. For he lives upon his own land, and amongst his own people; and is a complete and lovely example to them of a life quite simple indeed, but in the highest sense loyal, noble, and orderly. But what is one amongst so many? To most of his own order Sir George Ambrose appears merely as a madman, because he sees that it is altogether a nobler thing for a man to be brave and chivalrous than it is to be fashionable; and because he looks forward on his dying day to remembering the human souls that he has saved alive, rather than the pheasants which he has shot dead.'

Now the husband of Lady Ambrose was known chiefly as a pushing parvenu, with a magnificent new country house, immense preserves, and a yacht of four hundred tons that never went out of the Solent: there was therefore some wonder excited by Mr. Herbert's words, since the thought of any other Sir George never came for an instant into any one's head. Lady Ambrose herself was in utter amazement. She could not tell what to make of it, and she was as near looking confused as she had ever been in her The awkwardness of the situation was felt by many; and to cover it a hum of conversation sprang up, with forced alacrity. But this did not make matters much better; for in a very short while the sonorous tones of Mr. Rokeby were heard above all the minor voices, denouncing in no measured terms the great landowners of England, 'who were once' he said, 'in some true sense a Nobility, but are now the portentousest Ignobility that the world ever set eyes upon.' Every one felt that this was approaching dangerous ground; nor were they at all reassured when Mr. Rokeby, warming with his subject, exclaimed amidst a complete silence, 'yes-here they come, with coats of the newest fashion,

pedigrees of the newest forging, with their moors in Scotland, with their rivers in Norway, with their game preserves in England, with some thousands of human beings calling them masters, somewhere—they probably forget where—and with the mind of a thinking man, or with the heart of a gentleman, nowhere. Here they come, our cotton-spinning plutocrats, bringing in luxury, and vulgarity, and damnation!

These last words came like a thunder-clap. Laurence hardly knew where to look. The result, however, was more satisfactory than could have been expected. There are some emotions, as we all know, that can be calmed best by tears. Lady Ambrose did not cry. She did something better—she laughed.

'What would poor Sir George say?' she whispered to Laurence. 'He is fishing in Norway at this very moment. But do you really think,' she went on, determining not to shirk the subject, 'that Society is really as bad as Mr. Rokeby says? I was reading the Comte de Grammont's Memoirs the other day, and I am sure nothing goes on in London now so bad as what he describes.'

'Do you know, Lady Ambrose,' said Mr. Herbert, who concluded that he had given her much pleasure by his late remarks, 'I think the state of London at the present day infinitely worse than anything Grammont or his biographer could have dreamed of.'

'Quite so,' said Mr. Luke; 'the bulk of men in our days are just as immoral as they were in Charles the Second's; the only difference is that they are incomparably more stupid; and that, instead of decking their immorality with the jewels of wit, they clumsily try to cover it with the tarpaulin of respectability. This has not made the immorality any the better; it has only made respectability the most contemptible word in the English language.'

'The fop of Charles's time,' said Leslie, 'aimed at seeming a wit and a scholar. The fop of ours aims at being a fool and a dunce.'

'Ay,' said Mr. Rokeby; 'society, sick at heart as it was then with a pestilent disease, had got some life in it. But now—it is clean gone to pieces—the whole organism fallen asunder; what was once the head, the aristocracy, by rights the seeing and the thinking part, being now quite brainless and eyeless, with nothing of head-like left to it, except the mouth, and that cannot so much as speak—only gormandise and yawn.'

'Society, you see,' said Lady Ambrose, 'is so much larger now than it was.'

'Ah!' said Laurence, shrugging his shoulders, 'in that sense, there is no society now.'

'I don't see how there can be,' said Miss Merton, 'when what

is called society is simply a great undignified scramble for fashionable distinction.'

- 'Fashion,' said Leslie, 'is the complexion of good society, and the rouge of bad.'
- 'Exactly,' said Laurence; 'and when society gets sickly and loses its complexion, it takes to rouge—as it is doing now; and the rouge eats into its whole system, and makes its health worse than ever.'
- 'You are the last person, Mr. Laurence,' said Lady Ambrose, 'you who go out so much, that I should have expected to hear railing against society.'
- 'Ah!' said Laurence, 'we cannot escape from our circum-I only wish we could. I go into the best society I can get, but I am not blind to the fact that this is very bad. Not that I do not know a number of very delightful people; but these are only isolated instances; and isolated instances do not make up society. That is a great structure, composed of an immense variety of stones, fitly or unfitly framed together; and, taking society as a whole, I doubt if it was at any time so generally bad as it is now. I am not saying now that it has forgotten its duties -that it cannot even conceive that it ever had any. That is of course quite true; but Mr. Rokeby has said that already. I am not complaining of its moral badness, but of its social badness-its utter ignorance of life as a fine art. What can be more barbarous than its amusements? How stupid it is. how devoid of culture, how utterly incapable of any enlightened interest!'
- 'Really,' said Mr. Stockton, 'I think you are doing society an injustice. It seems to me that enlightened interest is the very thing that is every where on the spread. The light of intellect is emerging from the laboratory and the dissecting-room, where it had its birth, and is gilding, with its clear rays, the dinner table, and even the ball-room. A freer, a truer, and a grander view of things, seems to me to be rapidly dawning on the world.'

'I fear, my dear sir,' said Mr. Luke, 'that these pleasing opinions of yours will not bear testing.'

'Do you mean,' said Mr. Stockton, 'that society as a rule is not infinitely better informed now than it was thirty years ago? Has it not infinitely fewer prejudices and infinitely more knowledge?'

'We should look to the effects of the knowledge, not to the knowledge itself,' said Mr. Luke. 'We cannot test the health of a society from looking over its examination papers in physical science.'

- 'How would you test it?' said Mr. Stockton, with a slight curl of the lip.
- 'There are many tests,' said Mr. Luke. 'Here is one, amongst the very subjects that Mr. Laurence has ordered us to talk about—art and literature.'
- 'I accept the test,' said Mr. Stockton. 'What, then, can be nobler than much modern poetry? There is some that I look upon as quite of the highest order.'
- 'When I spoke of our literature,' said Mr. Luke, loftily, 'I was not thinking of poetry. We have no poetry now.'
- 'Indeed?' said Mr. Stockton; 'I imagined you had written some yourself.'
- 'Ah!' exclaimed Mr. Luke, drawing a long sigh, 'I once knew what Goethe calls "the divine worth of tones and tears." But my own poems only prove the truth of what I say. They could only have been written in evil days. They were simply a wail of pain, and now that I am grown braver, I keep silence. Poetry in some ages is an expression of the best strength; in ours it is the disguise of the worst weakness-or, when not that, it is simply a forced plant, an exotic. No-I was not speaking of our poetry when I spoke of our literature, but of the one natural and typical literary art-growth of our own day, the novel—a plant which, when it grows abundantly and alone, is always a sign of a poor soil. Look, then, at our novels, and see what sort of life they image what sentiments, what motives to action, what interests: and you will find a complete absence of anything that is really good, or noble, or righteous. You will find vapid characters, trivial interests-vulgar immoralities, and milk-and-water moralities. Look through all the novels of our time, and you will not find one approach to a hero-no really great and admirable actions. Spain was in some ways worse in Cervantes's time than England is in ours; but you may search all our novels for one character that has one tithe of Don Quixote's heroism, for one of our sane men that breathed in so healthy and pure an atmosphere as the inspired madman. And this is not from want of ability on the novelist's part. Some of them have powers enough and to spare: but the best novels only reflect back most clearly the social anarchy, and the bad ones are unconscious parts of it.
- 'And as for our painting,' said Mr. Herbert, 'that reflects, even more clearly than our literature, our hideous and our hopeless degradation. The other day, when I walked through the Royal Academy, my mind was literally dazzled by the infernal glare of corruption and vulgarity that was flashed upon me from every side. There were, indeed, only two pictures in the whole

collection that were not entirely abominable; and these were, one of them three boulders in the island of Sark, the other a study of pebbles on the beach at Ilfracombe.'

'I know little about the technicalities of art,' said Mr. Stockton, 'so I will not presume to dispute this point with you.'

'Well,' said Leslie, 'here is another test quite as good as art and literature—love and money, and their relations in our days.'

He would have continued speaking; but Mr. Herbert allowed him no time.

'The very things,' he said, 'I was about to touch upon—the very things the pictures the other day suggested to me. For seeing how the work of the painter becomes essentially vile, so soon as it becomes essentially venal, I was reminded of the like corruption of what is far more precious than the work of any painter—our own English girls, who are prepared for the modern marriage-market on precisely the same principles as our pictures for the Royal Academy. There is but one difference. The work of the modern painter is vile from its very beginningin its conception and execution alike; but our girls we receive, in the first instance, entirely fair and sacred from the hands of God himself, clothed upon with a lovelier vesture than any lilies of the field—–

'Really,' whispered Lady Ambrose to Laurence, 'Providence

has done so very little for us, as far as vesture goes.'

'---And we,' Mr. Herbert went on, 'with unspeakable profanity presume to dress and to decorate them, till the heavenly vesture is entirely hidden, thinking, like a modern Simon Magus, that the gifts of God are to be purchased for money, and not caring to perceive that, if they are to be purchased with the devil's money, we must first convert them into the devil's gifts.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Sinclair, with a faint smile, 'the day for love-

matches is quite gone over now.'

But her words were drowned by Mr. Saunders, who exclaimed at the top of his voice, and in a state of great excitement, 'Electric telegraphs-railways-steam printing presses-let me beg of you to consider the very next subject set for us—riches and civilisation -and to judge of the present generation by the light of that.'

'I have considered them,' said Mr. Herbert, 'for the last thirty

years-and with inexpressible melancholy.'

'I conceive,' said Mr. Saunders, 'that you are somewhat

singular in your feelings.'

'I am,' said Mr. Herbert; 'and the fact that I am singular, is fraught for me with the most ominous significance. Yet how could I-who think that health is more than wealth, and who hold

it a more important thing to separate right from wrong than to identify men with monkeys—how could I hope to be anything but singular in a generation that deliberately, and with its eyes open, prefers a cotton-mill to a Titian?'

- 'I hold it,' said Mr. Saunders, 'to be one of the great triumphs of our day, that it has so subordinated all the vaguer and more lawless sentiments to the solid guidance of sober economical considerations. And not only do I consider a cotton-mill, but I consider even a good sewer, to be a far nobler and a far holier thing—for holy in reality does but mean healthy—than the most admired Madonna ever painted.'
- 'A good sewer,' said Mr. Herbert, 'is, I admit, an entirely holy thing; and would all our manufacturers and men of science bury themselves underground, and confine their attentions to making sewers, I, for one, should have little complaint against them.'
- 'And are railways, telegraphs, gas-lamps—is the Bessemer steamer, nothing in your eyes? Is it nothing that all the conditions of life are ameliorated, that mind is daily pursuing farther its conquest over matter?'
- 'Have we much to thank you for,' said Mr. Herbert, 'that you have saved us from an hour of sea-sickness, if in return you give us a whole life-time of heart-sickness? Your mind, my good sir, that you so boast of, is so occupied in subduing matter, that it is entirely forgetful of subduing itself—a matter, trust me, that is far more important. And as for your amelioration of the conditions of life—that is not civilisation which saves a man from the need of exercising any of his powers, but which obliges him to exert his noble powers; not that which satisfies his lower feelings with the greatest ease, but which provides satisfaction for his higher feelings, no matter at what trouble.'
- 'Other things being equal,' said Mr. Saunders, 'I apprehend that the generation that travels sixty miles an hour is at least five times as civilised as the generation that only travels twelve.'
- 'But the other things are not equal,' said Mr. Herbert; 'and the other things, by which I suppose you mean all that is really sacred in the life of man, have been banished or buried by the very things which we boast of as our civilisation.'
- 'That is our own fault,' said Mr. Saunders, 'not the fault of civilisation.'
- 'Not so,' said Mr. Herbert. 'Bring up a boy to do nothing for himself—make everything easy for him—to use your own expression, subdue matter for him—and that boy will never be able to subdue anything for himself. He will be weak in body, and a coward in soul—.'

- 'Precisely,' said Mr. Saunders. 'We only need our bodies to be strong, so long as we have to overcome obstacles with our own strength. We only need to be brave so long as we have enemies to attack. But my own hope is that through these seeming evils—want of strength and want of bravery—the great world-problem will be solved; and, though universal cowardice may seem at first sight an unsightly child for civilisation to produce, it will more than reconcile us to its homeliness, by being in its turn the father of universal peace.'
- 'Yes,' said Mr. Rokeby, 'that is just what the world is coming to—a universal peace; which never can nor will mean anything else than peace with the devil.'

'Really,' said Lady Ambrose to Leslie, 'do you think we are in such a bad way as all this? Dr. Jenkinson, I must ask you—you always know these things—do you think we are so very bad?'

- 'Yes—yes,' said the Doctor, turning towards her with a cheerful smile, 'there is a great deal that is very bad in our own days—very bad indeed. Many thoughtful people think that there is more that is bad in the present than there has ever been in the past. Many thoughtful people in all days have thought the same.'
- 'True it is,' said Mr. Rokeby, 'that whenever wise men have taken to thinking about their own times, they have always thought ill of them. But that is because the times must have gone wrong before the wise men take to the business of thinking about them at all. We are never conscious of our constitutions till they are out of order.'
- 'Ah! yes,' said Mr. Luke; 'how true that is, Rokeby! Philosophy may be a golden thing. But it is the gold of the autumn woods, that soon falls, and leaves the boughs of the nation naked.'

'Yes,' said Leslie, 'leaving nothing but

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.'

- 'Thank you, Mr. Leslie,' exclaimed Mr. Herbert across the table, 'thank you—an exquisitely apt quotation.'
- 'Then you are a pessimist, Mr. Leslie?' said Lady Ambrose, a little indignantly.
- 'I think in some ways our age could not well be worse. It is almost impossible to come across anybody now-a-days who believes anything. Don't you find that?'
- 'Indeed I do not,' said Lady Ambrose, with some vigour, 'and I am very sorry for those who do. That Mr. Saunders,' she added, lowering her voice, 'is the first person I ever heard express such views. We were dining only the other day with the Bishop of——,

and he said that the average number of churches built yearly, during the last ten years, was greater than it ever had been since the Reformation. That does not look as if religion was on the decline. I know the Bishop spoke of a phase of infidelity that was passing over the nation; but that, he said, would soon have drifted by. Indeed he told us that all the teachings of modern irreligious science were simply reproductions of—you must not laugh at me if I say the names wrong—Epicurus and Democritus—which had been long ago refuted. And that was no peculiar crotchet of his own mind; for a very clever gentleman who was sitting next me said that that was the very thing which all the bishops agreed in saying—almost the only thing indeed in which they did agree.'

'Ah!' said Leslie, 'materialism once came to the world like a small street boy throwing mud at it; and the indignant world very soon drove it away. But it has now come back again, dirtier than ever, bringing a big brother with it, and Heaven knows when we shall get rid of it now.'

'In every state of transition,' said Dr. Jenkinson to Miss Merton, 'there must always be much uneasiness. But I don't think,' he said, with a little pleased laugh, 'that you will find these times really much worse than those that went before them. No—no. If we look at them soberly, they are really a great deal better. We have already got rid of a vast amount of superstition and ignorance, and are learning what Christianity really is. We are learning true reverence—that is, not to dogmatise about subjects of which we cannot possibly know anything.'

'Just so, Jenkinson,' said Mr. Luke; 'that is the very thing I am trying to teach the world myself. Personal immortality, for instance, which forms no part of the sweet secret of the authentic——'

- 'Yes—yes,' said the Doctor, hastily; 'the Church had degraded the doctrine. It needed to be expressed anew.'
  - 'Of course,' said Miss Merton, 'I as a Catholic---'
- 'Dear! dear!' exclaimed the Doctor, in some confusion, 'I beg your pardon. I had no notion you were a Roman Catholic.'
- 'I was going to say,' Miss Merton went on, 'that, though of course as a Catholic I am not without what I believe to be an infallible guide, I feel just as much as any one the bad state in which things are now. It is so difficult to shape one's course in life. One has nowhere any work cut out for one. There is a want of—well—of what perhaps, when religion has been reduced to a science, will be called moral ozone in the air.'
  - 'Such a feeling is not unnatural,' said the Doctor; 'but one

finds it vanish if, as Mr. Rokeby said, one just does the duty next one—be it only to order dinner. And,' he said, turning to her rather abruptly, 'don't despond over the times. That only makes them worse. Besides, they are not really at all bad. There is no need for desponding at all.'

'But there is at least excuse,' said Laurence, 'when we see all the old faiths, the old ideas, under which the world had so long found shelter, fading

### Like the baseless fabric of a vision,

rapidly and for ever away from us.'

'I don't think so,' said the Doctor, as if that settled the question.

'Christianity,' said Mr. Stockton, 'is only retiring to make way for something better. Religions are not quickened unless they perish. Look forward at the growing brightness of the future, not at the faded brightness of the past.'

'Why not look at the present?' said Dr. Jenkinson. 'Depend upon it, it is not wise to be above one's times. There's plenty of religion now. The real power of Christianity is growing every

day, even where you least expect it.'

- 'I don't know what the reality of Christianity may be,' said Leslie; 'but I only know that, if you take four out of five of the really instructed and thoughtful men of the day, you will find that they not only have no faith in a personal God, or a personal immortality, but the very notions of such things seem to them absurdities.'
- 'Yes,' growled Mr. Rokeby; 'it was once thought a characteristic of the lowest savages not to believe in a future life. It will soon be thought a characteristic of the lowest savages to believe in one.'
- 'Consciousness,' screamed Mr. Saunders, 'cannot exist without a brain, and unless the whole universe be one vast brain, and this be God——'
- 'Personal immortality and a personal Deity,' said Mr. Luke, drowning the voice of Mr. Saunders, 'are no doctrines of Christianity. You, Jenkinson, I know, agree with me.'

There was nothing the Doctor so disliked as these appeals from Mr. Luke. He made in this case no response whatever. He turned instead to Miss Merton.

'This age,' he said in a very quiet, but very judicial way, 'is simply one amongst many ages of transition. It is not peculiar.'

Here he paused, as he had a way of doing at times between his sentences. This practice now, as it had often been before, was of a disservice to him; for it gave a fatal facility for interruption

when he could least have wished it. In this case Leslie entirely put him out, by flatly contradicting him in a statement which the Doctor least of all had designed to bear question.

'But in some ways,' said Leslie, 'this age is peculiar, surely. It is peculiar in the extraordinary rapidity of its changes. Christianity took three hundred years to supplant polytheism; atheism has hardly taken thirty to supplant Christianity.'

'I suppose,' said Miss Merton, 'you think Catholicism quite a

thing of the past.'

'I can't pronounce upon that,' said Leslie. 'But you must admit that there have been great changes—and what I say is, that these have come on the world so quickly that they have plunged it into a state of mental anarchy that has not been equalled since mental order has been known. There is no recognised rule of life anywhere. The old rules only satisfy those who are not capable of feeling the need of any rule at all. Every one who does right at all, only does what is right in his own eyes. All society is disintegrated.'

'I look upon social dissolution,' said Mr. Rose, 'as the true condition of the most perfect life. For the centre of life is the individual, and it is only through dissolution that the individual can re-emerge. All the warrings of endless doubts, all the questionings of matter and of spirit, which I have myself known, I value only, because, remembering the weariness of them, I take a profounder and more exquisite pleasure in the colour of a crocus, the pulsations of a chord of music, or a picture of Sandro Botticelli's.'

Mr. Rose's words hardly produced all the effect he could have wished; for the last part was almost drowned in the general rustle of the ladies rising.

'Before we go, Mr. Laurence,' said Lady Ambrose, 'will you be good enough to tell me the history of these salt-cellars? I wanted to have asked you at the beginning of dinner, but you made yourself so very appalling then, that I really did not venture.'

'Well,' said Laurence, 'no doubt they surprise you. They were a present made to me the other day by a friend of mine—an eminent man of science, and are models of a peculiar kind of retort he has invented, for burning human bodies, and turning them into gas.'

'Good gracious!' said Lady Ambrose, 'how horrible! I insist, Mr. Laurence, on your having another set to-morrow night—remember.'

'There,' said Laurence, when the gentlemen had re-settled themselves, and had begun their wine, 'there is the new version

of the skeleton at the banquet-board—the two handfuls of white dust, to which we, the salt of the earth, shall one day crumble. Let us sacrifice all the bulls we have to pitiless Pluto, or ourselves to one another or to Heaven—to this favour must we come. Isn't that so, Mr. Storks?'

'Laurence,' said Dr. Jenkinson, briskly, 'the conversation hasn't kept pace with the dinner. We have got no farther than "The Present," yet. The ladies are going to talk of "The Future," by themselves. See—they are out on the terrace.'

Mr. Storks here drew his chair to the table, and cleared his throat.

'It is easier,' he said, 'to talk about the present now we are alone—now they,' he nodded his head in the direction of the party on the terrace, 'are gone out to talk about the future in the moonlight. There are many things which even yet it does not do to say before women, at least before all women.'

'My aunt,' said Laurence, 'is a great authority on woman's education and true position; and she has written an essay to advance the female cause.'

'Indeed?' said Mr. Storks; 'I was not aware of that. I shall look forward with much pleasure to some conversation with her. But what I was going to say related to the present, which at dinner was on all sides so mercilessly run down. I was going to claim for the present, as its noble and peculiar feature, a universal and intrepid determination to find out and face the entire truth of things, and to allow no prejudice, however dear to us, to obscure our vision. This is the only real morality; and not only is it full of blessing for the future, but it is giving us "manifold more in this present time" as well. The work of science, you see, is two-fold; it enlarges the horizon of the mind, and improves the conditions of the body. If you will pardon my saying so, Mr. Herbert, I think your antipathy to science must be due to your not having fully appreciated its true work and dignity.'

'The work of science is, I know, twofold,' said Mr. Herbert, 'speculative and practical.'

'Exactly so,' said Mr. Storks, approvingly.

'And all it can do for us in speculation,' said Mr. Herbert, 'is to teach us that we have no life hereafter: all it can do for us in practice, is to ruin our life here. It enervates us by providing us with base luxury; it degrades us by turning our attention to base knowledge.'

'No-no,' said Dr. Jenkinson, with one of his little laughs, 'not that. I don't think, Mr. Storks, that Mr. Herbert always quite means what he says. We mustn't take him at his word.'

'My dear sir,' said Mr. Herbert, turning to the Doctor, 'you are a consecrated priest of the mystical Church of Christ'—Dr. Jenkinson winced terribly at this—' and let me ask you if you think it the work of Christ to bring into men's minds eternal corruption, instead of eternal life—or rather not corruption, I should say, but putrefaction. For what is putrefaction but decomposition? And at the touch of science all our noblest ideas decompose and putrefy, till our whole souls are strewn with dead hopes and dead religions, with corpses of all the thoughts we loved

Quickening slowly into lower forms.

You may call it analysis, but I call it death.'

'I wish we could persuade you,' said Mr. Stockton, very temperately, 'to take a fairer view of things. Surely truth cannot in the long run be anything but life-giving.'

'Let us take care of facts,' said Mr. Storks, 'and fictions-I

beg your pardon, religion-will take care of itself.'

'And religion,' said Mr. Stockton, 'will take care of itself very well. Of course we don't waste time now in thinking about personal immortality. We shall not live; but the mind of man will; and religion will live too, being part of the mind of man. Religion is, indeed, to the inner world, what the sky is to the outer. It is the mind's canopy—the infinite mental azure in which the mysterious source of our being is at once revealed and hidden. Let us beware, then, of not considering religion noble; but let us beware still more of considering it true. We may fancy that we trace in the clouds shapes of real things; and, as long as we know that this is only fancy, I know of no holier occupation for the human mind, than such cloud-gazing. But let us always recollect that the cloud which to us may seem shaped like a son of man. may seem to another to be backed like a weasel, and to another to be very like a whale. What, then,' Mr. Stockton added, 'can be a nobler study than the great book of Nature, or, as we used to call it, the works of God?'

'I do not complain,' said Mr. Herbert, 'that this generation does study Nature, but that it does not study her. You can imprison her in your test-tubes, you can spy at her through your microscopes; but can you see her with your own eyes, or receive her into your own souls? When God looked at the world, and saw that it was very good, was He thinking, not of the lands and of the waters with their glad colour, of the wings of the morning which He had covered with silver, and the feathers of the evening with gold, but was He thinking of the sixty-three bases out of which He had been clever enough to manufacture this? or else did He look on it as a curious figure in a dance, chanced upon by the great

corps-de-ballet of the atoms? Is water, think you, a nobler thing to the modern chemist, who can tell you exactly what gases it is made of, and nothing more; or to Turner, who could not tell you at all what it is made of, but who knew its azure, and its purple, its gentle sleep and its terrible awakening? When Pindar called water the best of things, was he thinking of it as the union of oxygen and hydrogen——'

'He would have been much wiser if he had been,' interposed Dr. Jenkinson. 'Thales, to whose theory, as you know, Pindar was referring——' But the Doctor's words were utterly unavailing to check the torrent of Mr. Herbert's eloquence. They only turned

it into a slightly different course.

'Ah! masters of modern science,' he went on, 'you can tell us what pure water is made of; but, thanks to your drains and your mills, you cannot tell us where to find it. You can, no doubt, explain to us all about sunsets; but the smoke of your towns and your factories has made it impossible for us to see one. However, each generation is wise in its own wisdom; and ours would sooner look at a fœtus in a bottle, than at a statue of the god Apollo, from the hand of Phidias, and in the air of Athens.'

During all this speech Mr. Storks had remained with his face buried in his hands, every now and then drawing in his breath through his teeth, as if he were in pain. When it was over he looked up, with a scared expression, as if some great calamity had suddenly fallen upon him.

'Of course,' said Mr. Stockton, 'mere science, as science, does

not deal with moral right and wrong.'

'No,' said Mr. Saunders, 'for it has shown that right and wrong are terms of a bygone age, connoting altogether false ideas. Mere automata as science shows we are—clock-work machines,

wound up by meat and drink----'

'As for human automatism,' interrupted Mr. Storks, who had by this time recovered himself—and his deep heavy voice quite drowned Mr. Saunders—' that is a question which science has not as yet decided. It may be true, or it may not. I myself am indifferent. Supposing that the Deity—if there be one—should offer to make me a machine, if I am not one, on condition that I should always go right, I, for one, would gladly close with the proposal.'

'You forget,' said Allen, 'that in the moral sense, if there were no possibility of going wrong, there could be no possibility of

going right.'

'Fancy a watch or a steam-engine committing sin,' said Leslie.

'Sin,' said Mr. Storks, 'is a word that has helped to retard

moral and social progress more than anything. Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so; and the superstitious and morbid way in which a number of entirely innocent things have been banned as sin, has caused more than half the tragedies of the world. Science will establish an entirely new basis of morality; and the sunlight of rational approbation will shine on many a thing, hitherto overshadowed by the curse of a hypothetical God.'

'Exactly so,' said Mr. Saunders, eagerly. 'I have little doubt, for instance, that in the future the great question of woman's sphere of action will be solved by the recognition of prostitution as an

honourable and beneficent profession.'

'Sir!' exclaimed Mr. Storks, striking the table, and glaring with indignation at Mr. Saunders, 'I could hardly have believed that such misplaced flippancy——'

'Flippancy! it is reasoned truth,' shrieked Mr. Saunders,

upsetting his wine-glass.

Luckily this brought about a pause. Laurence took advantage of it.

'See,' said Laurence, 'Dr. Jenkinson has left us. Will no one have any more wine?—Then suppose we follow him.'

(To be continued.)

# Current Coins somewhat Defaced.

When Prince Hal, in one of his memorable fencing-bouts with Sir John Falstaff, quotes a verse of King Solomon's Proverbs, his fat adversary compliments him upon possessing, amongst his other royal gifts and graces, that of 'iteration with an emphasis.' I am not sure that all his princely virtues have descended to these latter days—in fact, I most devoutly wish that they had done so—but this particular characteristic of 'iteration' appears to me to be a noticeable feature of the present era. There are a certain quantity, and a very large quantity, of 'property' quotations afloat upon the world, which are pretty sure to make their appearance, some or others of them, in every printed sheet which comes into one's hands, and to be heard in almost every speech that is made.

And, from the inaccuracy with which some of these are iterated and reiterated, it appears no less certain that they have not been dug out of the mine by those who use them, but have passed from hand to hand as current coin, without much suspicion, or perhaps care, on the part of the users, as to whose image and superscription they bear.

The consequence is, that the inaccuracy has grown to be part and parcel of the very essence of the quotation, beyond the hope or possibility of severance or correction. Mr. Thackeray describes some old lady who has Shakespeare's plays read to her every night; which works, adds that keen observer, 'she said she liked, but didn't': these words appear to describe very nearly the idiosyncrasy of the good people who use and misuse the passages in question, inasmuch as almost all these 'current coins' issue from that rich treasury.

Any Handbook of Quotations incontestably proves the fact that no author in England is quoted one-twentieth part as much as Shakespeare, and that of all his plays 'Hamlet' is infinitely the most used. As a matter of statistics, I find that there are some 120 quotations from 'Hamlet' alone which are worn literally threadbare with constant and hard use; so much so, indeed, is this the case, that they may be said to have become almost as much the symbols of certain things as the very words of the language itself. Not any one of the quotations from 'Hamlet'

leads, I think, a harder life than the famous and sorely-abused 'ills that flesh is heir to,' which appears scarcely ever to enjoy one day's, perhaps one hour's, rest; and yet, strange to say, the words are not in Shakespeare at all, nor anywhere else, except as a quotation. The words intended to be cited are of course taken from the world-renowned soliloquy—which, as Hartley Coleridge truly says, 'has been murdered by its own celebrity'—where Hamlet enumerates, amongst the burthens of humanity,

The thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to;

the word 'ills' not occurring at all in the passage; and the word 'shocks' being required by the whole context of the soliloquy, which pictures life as a passage through an opposing host, and enumerates with such surpassing eloquence and such marvellous pathos the various 'shocks' sustained by the combatant in that unequal struggle. Nevertheless, 'ills' it is, and 'ills' it will doubtless remain. The false word is too deeply rooted in the national mind and heart to leave a chance for the true one; and, like the ventriloquist in Æsop, will certainly retain possession of the field, let the real pig squeak never so naturally.

There is another passage in the same author nearly as much quoted as the one already mentioned, and which is supposed to possess a peculiarly Shakespearian flavour and relish; and yet there is very great reason to doubt whether the words ever sprang from the great poet's teeming brain. It is the celebrated passage in 'Henry V.,' in which Mrs. Quickly pictures the death-bed of Prince Hal's cast-off companion, where she reports that, in the

Last scene of all, Which ends this strange eventful history,

the dying knight 'babbled of green fields.' But, as all Shake-spearian scholars well know, the words in the first edition are 'a table of green fields;' and so they were reprinted, with various suggestions, until Theobald, in a moment of happy inspiration, proposed 'babbled' for 'table,'—an emendation so extraordinarily fortunate as to meet with acceptance from almost all subsequent editors, and to have been built into the language of England beyond the possibility of severance. Theobald's idea was certainly a most felicitous one. To make the dying reprobate turn away for one brief moment from the several remembrances of his long and ill-spent life, and see again in the mirror of his memory the 'green fields' of his happy and innocent childhood flashed across his mental vision by the hand of Death, was to add the one touch of pathos necessary to heighten the interest of his death-bed.

Such a mental change in the moment almost of death appears a natural prelude to that most marvellous physical change which passes so quickly over the tenement of clay when deserted by its occupant, and which, as in a moment, effaces the deep furrows made by the plough of Time, or the scars left by the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,' and leaves in their stead that placid almost smile:

And this change of death is a curious physiological puzzle, and looks as though the natural tendency of the 'well-worn clay' was to regain something of the quietness and innocence of Eden so soon as the 'perturbèd spirit' relaxed its grasp upon it—so soon as it was lifted off from 'the rack of this tough world':

A worn-out fetter that the soul Had broken and cast away.

Assuredly, of all the pathetic reflections attaching to a sinful life, none appears so affecting as the remembrance that the old, wornout, sin-stained roué was once a happy little child, with a pure soul fresh from its Creator's hands. And yet, as I have said, there is no tittle of evidence that Shakespeare ever wrote the words in question, and the context of the passage renders it extremely doubtful whether they are his.

To return to 'Hamlet,' there is another line in his soliloquy nearly, if not quite, as much quoted as the one already mentioned; but here, although the words are always quoted with perfect correctness, the precise meaning of them appears invariably missed. The line in question is that which runs,

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil;

the last word of which leads to the mistake I mean, from the simple fact that in Shakespeare's time 'coil' meant trouble, fuss, bother, and that it is now understood to mean only the twist or helix of a rope, wire, or snake. As some meaning must be attached in the popular mind to the word, and as the real meaning of it is generally unknown, the 'mortal coil' has become vaguely understood to mean the 'mortal body,' the burthen of the flesh—a result attributable partly to the word coil being associated with the idea of a snake, and partly to the 'shuffling off' which precedes it.

Not long ago a writer in Fraser introduced the snake bodily

into the metaphor, in some verses which appeared in that magazine, and which ran as follows:

Ask not what next shall be, When we have shuffled off This so familiar flesh, This mortal coil and slough.

The snake renews his youth
And burgeons with the spring;
The swallow from the south
Floats back on annual wing.

Here, it will be seen, we have the snake itself—coil, slough, and all; and there is little doubt that this exactly expresses the common idea of the passage in question. Nor is this the only corroboration of the impression that 'coil' means the burthen of the flesh; for in the play of 'Bonduca' (act iv. sc. 1) occurs the following passage:

Would ye learn How to die bravely, Romans; to fling off This case of flesh, lose all your cares for ever?

—a quotation for which I am indebted to Mr. C. M. Ingleby, and which is certainly a remarkable confirmation of the general idea.

But, nevertheless, there can be little real dispute that Shake-speare had no intention of putting a snake into Hamlet's mouth. The word coil is derived from the Danish quellen, to boil, or bubble forth as a spring, and means simply the tumult and worry of humanity—the

Double, double toil and trouble; Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble,

of the weird sisters in 'Macbeth.' It is never once used by Shake-speare to signify the twist or helix of a snake's normal position in repose, but it is used by him some dozen times to mean trouble or fuss. That enlightened officer Dogberry uses it in his famous charge to the watch ('Much Ado about Nothing,' act iii. sc. 3): 'I pray you watch about Signor Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow there is a great coil to-night.' The Shake-speare Concordance will reveal the other eleven instances of its use, in no single one of which can it possibly be made to mean a twist or helix, or to have any connection or association with a snake.

The idea in Hamlet's mind is evidently that of a tired traveller divesting himself of his dress and retiring to rest:

To die,—to sleep:— No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream:—ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

The weary pilgrim approaches his bed, too tired even to undress ceremoniously, and 'shuffling off' his garments with hasty carelessness on to the floor, as he nears the longed-for rest of sleepthat sleep of death which is to still the aching heart for evermore! Undoubtedly the 'shuffling off' has been a main agent in the mistake, and in the consequent introduction of the snake. But the snake of zoology, in shuffling off its skin or slough in its yearly renovation, is obliged to untwist its coil for the moment, and to stretch itself out at full length, in order to pull off the worn-out skin; it by no means shuffles off its coil, which might possibly be a difficult operation. The whole mistake reminds one forcibly of the beautiful Greek myth of 'Psyche,' in which the Greek word means both 'the soul' and 'a butterfly,' from the marvellous resurrection of the beautiful winged fly from the dull and sombre chrysalis. The idea in both cases seems to be the same, and to symbolise by the natural processes of the animal world the great change which occurs to dying humanity.

Lord Byron appears to have been a diligent reader of Shakespeare, notwithstanding his recorded opinion that his great predecessor was over-estimated; and he frequently quotes him with great humour and adroitness. But in the third canto of 'Childe Harold' there occurs a quotation from the poet which suggests some possible misconception of the passage quoted. It is in the 118th stanza of that canto, and runs thus:

In the crowd

They could not deem me one of such: I stood

Among them, but not of them; in a shroud

Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,

Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

And a foot-note to the last line contains a quotation from 'Macbeth':

If it be thus, For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind.

Now the passage in 'Macbeth' is clear enough. He is reflecting upon his murder of Duncan, and the uselessness of that crime, supposing that his crown should devolve upon Banquo's children. He says of Banquo, that the witches

Hail'd him father to a line of kings: Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown, And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,

Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand, No son of mine succeeding. If it be so, For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind; For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;

and so on. 'Filed' is here, of course, 'defiled;' and Macbeth means to say that he has stained his soul with a crime which will benefit only Banquo's issue.

But the lines in 'Childe Harold' are hardly intelligible upon the same principle; nor is the word printed with an apostrophe, as if the 'de' were omitted. Perhaps the 111th stanza may throw some light on Byron's meaning:

And to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught,
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal,
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul. No matter—it is taught.

It seems to me that the 'steeling' in this stanza has some vague association with the 'filing' in the other; and that the thought running in Byron's mind was that of forging and working his mind by strenuous effort into the shape he desired it to assume. The words may perhaps suggest some foreshadowing of Tennyson's grand verses in the 'In Memoriam,' where he says—

That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use;

where the same figure is applied to the worker's life as Byron seems to apply to his mind: and the mental career is to be forged and fashioned by each one after his own ideal and by his own vigorous and earnest effort.

The notes to 'Childe Harold' were added, I believe, by the poet's friend Hobhouse; but I don't know who is responsible for the note in question, nor do I presume to say that I have plucked at the heart of the mystery, or that the foot-note may not contain the real elucidation of Byron's meaning. Very possibly it does: and Byron may have meant 'defiled:' But if Lord Byron, in the first quotation, meant that he had 'defiled' his mind and so weakened it that he was no longer able to soar above the crowd around him, enveloped in the atmosphere of his own sublimer thoughts, as Hobhouse's note implies (which result, indeed, is exceedingly

probable), then what becomes of the 'steeling' his mind in the second quotation, and so rendering it impervious to all hostile shafts? The allusion, by the way, in the first quotation to his mind 'subduing itself,' seems to point to the fable (or fact, is it?) of the scorpion dying by its own sting—a figure which I think he uses elsewhere, and is a strange and terrible revelation of his knowledge of his own state.

C. S.

# Joshua Haggard's Daughter.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.'

### CHAPTER XVII.

'E'EN AT TURNING O' THE TIDE.'

CYNTHIA took her place at the Squire's bedside, and assumed the care of the sick room with as much calmness and self-possession as if she had been trained in a city hospital. That intense faith which made the two Wesleys so strong to resist all earthly opposition, is the staff and anchor of all true followers in that wide school which they and Whitefield founded. Joshua's young wife had no fear that her strength would fail her in this ordeal. strength she needed would be given to her.

It was not a pleasing or an easy task either, this attendance upon an irritable old man who had served no apprenticeship to sickness, and to whom acute bodily pain was almost a new thing.

'Mrs. Haggard has been so good as to come to nurse you, father,' said Oswald, when he brought Cynthia to the bedside.

The Squire looked at the small grey figure—'a shadow like an angel with bright hair'-doubtfully.

- 'I don't know that girl,' he said. 'Your mother was never so pretty.'
  - 'Will you let her nurse you, father?' enquired Oswald.
- 'I don't want nursing, I only want to be let alone. something to drink,' said the Squire, with some inconsistency.

Cynthia examined the table by the bed, upon which empty medicine bottles, discarded poultices, rags, and dirty tumblers were crowded in unseemly confusion. There was an uncorked bottle containing half a tumbler of claret.

Does your father drink that wine?' asked Cynthia, as she washed a tumbler swiftly, while the Squire expressed a general sense of discomfort by feeble moanings.

'Yes, the doctor says he may have claret, but no other wine.' Cynthia put the tumbler in the wasted hand, which clutched it Digitized by 2031

with a tremulous eagerness, and supported the old man while he drank. She seemed to have a natural capacity and handiness which made these offices of charity easy to her.

'Phœbe will get you anything you want,' said Oswald, looking on helplessly.

Phæbe was standing on the other side of the bed, breathing hard and staring at Mrs. Haggard, open-mouthed and open-eyed, as at a supernatural appearance.

But on being thus referred to she made a curtsey, and said she should be pleased to wait upon the lady.

- 'And do you really think you shall be able to get on?' asked Oswald.
- 'I shall get on very nicely. You need not be anxious, Mr. Pentreath. It will be best for your father to be kept very quiet.'
- 'Yes, I daresay. I'll go to my own room. It's on this floor, and I shall be at hand if my father should ask for me. You'll send for me if he does, won't you?'
  - 'Yes, Phœbe shall come for you.'

Oswald lingered by the bedside before going away, and bent over his father with that helpless feeling which robust youth has in the presence of suffering age. It can pity, but can hardly sympathise. If it could share the burthen in any way, take half the pain, or all, it would do so; but it cannot measure or understand that agony.

'How are you feeling now, father?' asked the son.

'I feel as if a wolf was gnawing me, that's all,' gasped the old man. 'Go away. You only keep the air from me.'

Cynthia took a loose blanket from an arm-chair and spread it over the Squire's chest and shoulders, and then went quietly to the nearest window and opened it. The sweet cool night air blew in like a rush of refreshing waters upon a thirsty land.

'That's better,' cried the old man.

'You didn't oughtter open the windows,' said Phœbe; 'the doctor said we was to keep 'un warm!'

Cynthia found a screen in one corner of the room, and this she placed as a guard against the keen edge of the draught. She had a conviction that the sufferer needed air, but she was not going to do anything rash or reckless.

'Tell me what the doctor said about the leeches, and the poultices, and everything that is to be done, Phœbe,' she said.

At midnight Oswald looked into the room again. His father was sleeping the fitful, painful slumber of disease. Phœbe was snoring by the fire. Cynthia was seated by the bedside, reading her pocket Bible by the dim candle-light. What a graceful figure

it was in the neatly-fitting grey stuff gown, the Puritan muslin kerchief crossed over the delicately-moulded bust, the little white cap giving a matronly air to the bright young face!

The room seemed changed somehow since Cynthia's coming. The accumulated litter of the past week had been carried off. Everything was in its place, snowy linen on the bed, the hearth neatly swept, a small bright fire in the shining grate, a cheerful homelike air in the room which a few hours ago bad looked so desolate. And all had been done quietly, with the least possible inconvenience to the invalid.

- 'Has he been long asleep?' asked Oswald.
- 'About half an hour. I read to him a little before he went off.'
  - 'Out of your Bible?'
  - 'Yes.'
  - 'Did he like you're doing that?'
  - 'I think it soothed him.'

Oswald could hardly realise the idea of his father being instructed in the Scriptures by a Methodist preacher's wife. It seemed a general upheaving of things.

This went on for many days and nights. The Squire's life seemed to these patient watchers to tremble in the balance, though the doctor had made up his mind which way the balance was to turn at last. For many days and nights, without weariness or murmuring, Cynthia performed the painful tasks of the sick room, and was full of love and care for this grim old man, who, in his weakness, seemed like a baby in her arms, and was fain to submit to be ministered to as a baby might have done. While caring for this poor mortal body of his, she was full of tender anxiety for his imperishable soul; and this disciple of Tom Paine was fain to listen to that ineffable story which even the most hardened unbeliever must hear with some touch of love and awe. had not been taught to be doubtful of death-bed conversions; in her direct and positive creed this sinner—who perhaps, in all his life, had never done a good action or sacrificed a selfish desire was as near the gates of heaven as the man of spotless life and active benevolence, could he but he brought to acknowledge his unworthiness, to believe in the all-atoning Sacrifice which had been made for him, to accept in implicit faith the pardon that God was for ever holding out to sinners. A Shibboleth, perhaps, this parrot cry of instantaneous conversion, but this Shibboleth was to Cynthia a great reality.

Curious it must have seemed to the ear of the listener—had there been any one by—to hear this child fighting Satan beside

that dying-bed; arguing with the unbelieving mind, sharpened and hardened by fifty years' mature worldliness; pleading, praying, repeating divinest messages of compassion and love. The Squire heard her patiently, which was much. One night she sang one of Wesley's hymns, in a low sweet voice. The sound pleased and soothed the sick man, and after this he often bade her sing to him. Oswald paced the corridor softly sometimes of an evening, listening to those clear and pure tones, which had a soothing influence for him as well as for his father.

- 'I wish you would let my husband come and read to you, Mr. Pentreath,' Cynthia ventured to say one afternoon when the Squire seemed a little better than usual, and quite free from pain.
  - 'Your husband! Who is he?'
  - 'Joshua Haggard.'
- 'What, the Ranter? No; I'll have none of his preaching. He's a decent fellow, in his way, and has made money. My son is going to marry his daughter; but I'll have no ranting. I won't have fire and brimstone pelted at me on my death-bed. You may read what you like; it does no harm.'
- 'I don't think you know what kind of man my husband is,' remonstrated Cynthia, gently.
- 'Don't I! I know what field preachers are. You may hear 'em a mile off, raving about Sodom and Gomorrah and the worm that never dies. Haggard preached in the fields before he built that chapel of his. I'll have none of his howling.'

This was discouraging; but the Established Church, which, represented by a port-winey vicar of the good old school, had called politely, during the Squire's illness, to offer its ministrations, had also been kept at arm's-length by Mr. Pentreath, who swore that no tithe-pig parson should cross the threshold of his chamber while he had sense enough to forbid him.

Oswald showed considerable anxiety about Cynthia's comfort during this weary time of watching, and Joshua came to the Grange at least once a day to see for himself that his wife was not injuring her health by this work of charity. The acute attack of bronchitis had been conquered, chiefly by Cynthia's nursing, as the doctor frankly acknowledged; but the foe left the citadel in so dilapidated a state, that the cessation of active disease was by no means a warrant for the patient's recovery. The lamp flickered in the socket, and might at any moment be suddenly extinguished. The worn-out frame was not easily to be patched up by high feeding and stimulants, quinine or iron.

Once in every day Joshua Haggard came up to the long gallery, where the family portraits faced the searching north-west light,

which showed every crack in the surface, for a brief interview with his young wife.

'I'm afraid you are not getting enough rest, dearest,' he said, turning the small pale face towards the spring sunshine, and looking at it with anxious scrutiny.

'Yes, indeed, Joshua. I have some hours' sleep every day, while Phœbe watches for me. I let her sleep at night, poor girl; for it seems so painful to her to keep her eyes open after the clock has struck ten.'

'I am pleased for you to do this good work, my love. I am proud of you; but, remember that you have my happiness in charge. You must not sacrifice health even to duty—for my sake.'

He advanced this plea with a consciousness of its weakness, its selfishness.

'I walk in the garden every day when it is fine,' said Cynthia, anxious to reassure him as to her well-being. 'Naomi and Oswald take me for a little walk every afternoon. It is such a happiness to me to see her, dear girl.'

'Yes, she has told me about your walks together. I am pleased to think of your being so united; I feared there was a want of sympathy on Naomi's part.'

'No, Joshua. She has always been good to me; but I think we have been more drawn together since the Squire's illness. How glad I shall be when he gets well, and we can have the wedding! I want to see Naomi in that lovely grey silk. Does Dr. Harrow say that he will soon be well?'

'Dr. Harrow does not seem very hopeful; he thinks his patient in a sadly weak state.'

'But that racking cough is almost gone, and we shall soon make him strong.'

'I hope so, dear; but there is a disease called old age. The Squire has lived a hard life. He did not spare himself in his youth, when he gave himself up to what the world calls pleasure, and he has not spared himself of late years, while he has been a slave to Mammon. The thread of life is worn very thin, my love.'

This was a disappointment to Cynthia, who had begun to hope for the Squire's recovery. He was not an agreeable old man, but she had nursed him and cared for him, and she had grown in somewise attached to him. Oswald looked on wonderingly while she bent over the bed, soothing her charge with pretty tender speeches, supporting the grizzled head, holding the feverish hand, feeding the grim old sufferer as lovingly as if he had been a pet bird,

- 'How good you are!' he exclaimed one day. 'Is it in the nature of all women to be so tender? I can just remember my mother nursing me in some small illness, and she was like you; but then I was her favourite son, the creature she loved best on earth, as they tell me. You come here to nurse a stranger, and yet your tenderness for him seems inexhaustible.'
- 'I am so sorry for your poor father that I cannot help loving him,' Cynthia answered, simply.

'Ah! I see; that is what the old saw means: "Pity is akin to love."

Those walks with Naomi and her lover were a delight to Cynthia at this time; so keen a delight, that it sometimes occurred to her this pleasure might be sinful, a snare and a temptation which she ought in somewise to resist; for Joshua's teaching dwelt much upon snares, and the liability of weak human nature to be led astray by inclination.

After close confinement in the sick-room, the very air of heaven was a source of rapture. The bright spring afternoon, the windy sky with patches of deepest blue shining through white fleecy clouds, and just one dark cloud overhead, holding the promise of an April shower; the daffodils waving with every gust; the yellow chestnut buds just unfolding; the tender young ferns peeping up through the mossy ground in sheltered places, snake fern and adder fern—what could be more beautiful than the neglected old manor at such a season? Even the dark-red cattle had a friendly air, Cynthia thought, and looked at her with grave kindliness.

Never had Naomi been so kind or so loving to the poor little stepmother, and Oswald, who had seemed quite a remote unsympathetic personage a little while ago, came now so near as to be almost brotherly in his kindness—he was so grateful for Cynthia's devotion to his sick father.

For the space of an hour by Oswald's watch, these three perambulated the path on the skirts of the wood, making fresh discoveries of nature's progress every day, and admiring the wonder of this gradual yet swift awakening of old mother earth after the dreary winter sleep. How quickly the flower-buds opened, and the little curled-up leaflets widened into leaves; here, under last year's dead branches, are the ferns of next summer; the willows are yellow-green already; the mossy ground is enamelled with primroses and bluest violets.

'Please God the poor old father picks up strength, we shall be married before the hawthorns are in flower,' said Oswald to his betrothed.

Naomi's only answer was a sigh; for her father had told her how little hope the doctor entertained of his patient's recovery.

There was an appearance of improvement, however, at this time which deceived Oswald and Cynthia and the good-hearted drudge, Phœbe. The Squire's cough was almost gone, though his breathing was still troublesome, and his wits somewhat given to wander in the pauses of wakefulness between his brief slumbers: he was able to be moved from his bed to the great easy-chair, in which spacious piece of furniture he looked like a living mummy, propped up with pillows. This seemed a great advance upon his condition of ten days ago; and Oswald fancied him on the high-road to recovery—an opinion shared by the patient himself, though in querulous moments he declared that he shouldn't trouble anybody long, and that Oswald would soon have the handling of the estate.

'And a nice mess he will make of it, for he knows no more of business than a baby,' grumbled the Squire.

Seeing her charge so far restored, and believing his recovery an assured thing, despite her husband's despondent view of the case, Cynthia was now anxious to return to her home duties. Those duties were not manifold, certainly, since Judith Haggard was the mainspring of the household machine; but Cynthia was at least her husband's companion, and she knew that she was sorely missed by him. She had carefully instructed Phœbe in all the offices of the sick-room, and felt that she might now leave the Squire to that damsel's care, with just a little supervision and assistance from Oswald, who was a light sleeper, and might look in upon the invalid now and then of a night to give him his lemonade or his medicine.

When, however, Mrs. Haggard ventured to hint at departure, the Squire's distress was piteous to behold. Could she be so cruel as to talk of leaving him when but for her he should be in his grave? If she left him, he should die. Phœbe nurse him, indeed! Phœbe would murder him, with her big rough hands and her clumsy ways. He might die in his bed at any hour, with not a soul to help him, while Phœbe was snoring like a pig by the fireside. That girl thought of nothing but sleeping and eating; she was a lump of selfishness, like all the rest of his servants.

The old man shed tears; and the tears of feeble age are sad to see. What could Cynthia do? The tender heart, in which love and pity were the ruling instincts, was moved to deepest compassion. She told her husband of the Squire's distress, and he said stay.

'Stay, my love, if you can bear the trial of witnessing the end. It will not be long.'

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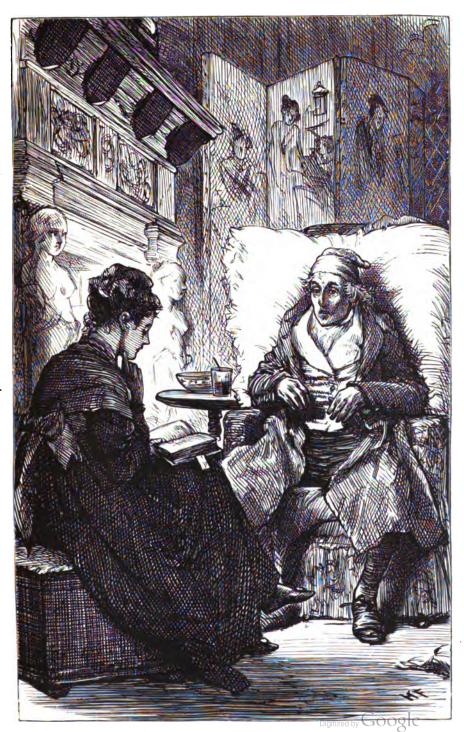
- 'Does the doctor really think he will die?'
- 'Yes, dear; the doctor is quite hopeless. Nothing less than a miracle could save him, he says, and God has ceased to work miracles for our worthless mortal bodies. His supernatural dealings are with our souls.'
  - 'Then I would not leave him on any account.'
- 'You have never seen death, Cynthia. You are not afraid to face the end?'
- 'No,' she answered bravely; 'I fear nothing since you have taught me where to put my trust.'

So Cynthia stayed and ministered to the departing sinner, and made these last days of his life sweeter to him than all the arid years of his widowhood in which human affection had been as dead in him as if he had been one of those conical stones which antiquity chose for its gods. He had grown really attached to his fair young nurse, and submitted to her with a senile docility.

- 'If I had had a daughter like you, my dear, I should have been a better man,' he said.
  - 'You have had a good son, dear Mr. Pentreath.'
- 'Yes, Oswald has never given me any trouble; but there's not much in him—a young man to be drawn any way. I'm afraid he'll spend my money like water. It's a hard thing to know one must lie in one's grave, not able to move a finger, while one's property is being made ducks and drakes of. That's the sting of death.'
  - 'No, no, dear friend; the sting of death is sin.'
- 'And isn't it sinful to fool away a fine estate?' cried the Squire, testily.

Wheeled close up to the glowing hearth in his big arm-chair, with a tumbler of warm negus, weak and harmless but soothing to the spirits, on the little table at his elbow, the Squire listened with great complacency to Cynthia's Scripture reading. If the Bible had been something less than it is, the keen old man would hardly have tolerated it, for he started with a strong prejudice in its disfavour. But the mighty Book compelled his attention, and seemed to appeal to him individually with a force his mortal weakness could not withstand.

Oswald now began to spend his afternoons in the sick-room, save that one hour which he spent out-of-doors with Cynthia and Naomi. The Squire liked to have him there, and was fond of calling his attention to certain passages of Scripture which, in the father's mind, bore upon his son's deficiencies. Oswald was the most patient listener to that pious reading, to those touching Wesleyan hymns which Cynthia used to sing in the gathering twilight. Joshua, while following that sect of Primitive Methodists and field preach-



CYNTHIA'S SCRIPTURE READING.

ers, which the Rev. Hugh Bourne had founded early in the century, had adopted the Wesleyan hymn-book, and differed from the modern Wesleyans chiefly in his closer adherence to the principles of their pious founder.

Sad, yet not unpleasing, days gliding gently by in that quiet chamber; a spacious bedroom, oak-panelled, with three deep-set windows, a carved mantelpiece, six feet high, and a curious old basket grate set round with blue and white Dutch tiles, Scriptural illustrations, to which the Squire referred now and then when Cynthia was reading.

'David! ah! there he is, slaying Goliath—the third from the top. I remember when I was a boy I used to take him for Jack the Giant-killer. And David was a sinner, was he, though the Lord loved him? Ah! the Lord had need to be fond of me, for I've been a great sinner. I wonder if John Wilkes is in heaven?'

Sweet slow days, which hardly left a trace behind them, one being so like another, save a vague memory of a pleasing sadness. It seemed to Oswald, by-and-by, as if all his life were shut in this grave old room, and the outside world were something in which he had no part. Naomi noticed that his manner was dreamy and absent-minded at this time, a change which she ascribed to natural anxiety about his father.

It was about half-way between midnight and morning, just when the night is coldest, most silent, most dismal, that the Squire called Cynthia to his bedside. He had been a little more restless than usual, and had wandered more between his snatches of broken sleep; had talked of his wild youth, naming old friends, old loves, long dead and half-forgotten.

'What was the name of that fellow who supped with us at the "Blue Posts?" he asked, eagerly. 'You know, don't you? a man with big whiskers and a belcher handkerchief—a fighting man.'

Cynthia knelt down by the bed and took his cold hand, and chafed it gently. There was a sharp ring in his voice which she had never heard before.

'That's a good girl, Polly; yes, my hand's very cold. You always had a good heart, Polly; but too fond of spending money. Yes, Polly, better marry the cheesemonger. He means well.'

Then the dull eyes turned suddenly on Cynthia, with slowly returning consciousness.

'Is it you, child? And you say God loves sinners?'

'God loves all things that He has made,' answered Cynthia, earnestly; 'and Christ died to save sinners. If you repent of

all your sins, dear Mr. Pentreath, and believe in that atoning Sacrifice.'

'I'm sorry I didn't live a better life, and that I hadn't a daughter like you,' said the Squire, faintly; and, letting his head sink softly upon Cynthia's breast, he quietly loosened his feeble hold upon this mortal life, and passed into the unknown land beyond it.

Not at first did Cynthia know that this was death; and when the truth dawned upon her, she uttered no cry, gave way to neither terror nor agitation, but gently laid the lifeless head upon the pillow, and went quietly to tell Oswald Pentreath that he was fatherless.

She was surprised, even in this awful moment, to see that his door was ajar, and a light burning in his room. She knocked, and he answered at once, 'Come in.'

'Why has he been sitting up?' she wondered.

He was sitting at a table with an open book before him, the candles burned down to the sockets of the old plated candlesticks, his hair and dress disordered as if he had been lying down, his eyes hollow and weary-looking. He started at sight of Cynthia, but did not move from his seat or change his dejected attitude, his elbows on the table, his head leaning on his hands.

- 'What is the matter?' he asked. 'Is my father worse?'
- 'All his pain is over, dear Oswald. God has taken him to His rest.'
- 'And you were with him at the last—alone—he died in your arms?'
  - 'Yes.'
- 'You are a saint; an angel,' cried Oswald, passionately, brushing the tears from his eyes. 'You came into this house as an angel of mercy—you brought life to my poor old father's darkened mind. You made his last days the sweetest he had ever known. How can I ever forget your goodness?'
- 'There is nothing for you to remember. I have only done my duty. How pale you look, Mr. Pentreath! this sudden loss has shocked you. He died so peacefully, and his last words were good. Is not that comforting?'
- 'How could his thoughts be evil with an angel at his side? Poor old man! And he is gone? Yes, it is very sudden.'
- 'Why were you sitting up all night? Had you a presentiment that the end was so near?'
- 'No,' with a bitter laugh. 'I sat up because I have lost the knack of sleeping. My thoughts are too active, and I try to quiet them with philosophy; but I can no more read than I can sleep.

My ideas travel in a circle, and always come back to the same point.'

- 'You have been too anxious about your father,' said Cynthia, with a look that was half pity, half wonder.
  - 'Yes; I am too devoted a son—that is my strong point.'
  - 'Will you go and see him?'
- 'Yes; and there will be people to send for, I suppose, as soon as it is light?'

He opened a shutter. The stars were pale in a cold grey sky: daybreak was at hand, and in that chilly half-light, Oswald Pentreath's haggard face looked like a ghost's.

He followed Cynthia to the Squire's room. Phœbe had roused the small household. The housekeeper was there already, and had begun the last dismal offices which life can render to death.

'I laid out your sweet mother, Mr. Pentreath,' faltered the crone. 'She looked lovely in her coffin.'

The old butler had gone to the village to awaken the sexton, in order that the passing bell might speedily inform Combhollow that its seigneur had departed. Phoebe stood at the bottom of the great fourpost-bed, with her apron over her face, weeping as in duty bound—not that she had loved Squire Pentreath, but because it was proper to cry at a death or a funeral. To weep for her deceased master was an obligation which, although not expressly set forth in the Catechism, was implied in the general idea of doing her duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call her. And if the Squire, although a hard man, should have happened to do the right thing in the way of legacies and mourning, it would be a comfort to remember having honoured him with these disinterested tears.

Oswald went round and kissed the cold brow of the dead, and then stood by the bedside, looking down at that unconscious clay, with a curious blank look in his own face, as if he knew not whether there were any further duty required of him. 'He looked clean daft,' the housekeeper said afterwards, when she and the old man-servant discussed the dismal scene over a substantial breakfast.

The shutters had been opened, and the candles burned with a yellow glare in the cold grey light. Cynthia looked at her neat silver watch, Joshua's gift upon her wedding morning.

'Half-past five o'clock,' she said. 'I think I had better go home now, Mr. Pentreath. If Joshua should hear the passing bell, he would be coming to fetch me.'

'Why not wait till he comes?' asked Oswald.

' I would rather save him the trouble. I can do no more good here.'

' No, you can do no more good.'

She took her black mantle from a drawer, and put on her bonnet, and then went up to Oswald, who was still standing by the bed, with that helpless absent look in his face.

- 'Good-bye, Mr. Pentreath; I hope you will take comfort to your heart in this loss.'
- 'I am coming with you. You cannot go home alone at this hour.'
- 'Do you think I am afraid of the birds or the opening flowers?' Cynthia asked.
  - ' You must not go alone.'
- 'Come with me, if you like. Joshua will be glad to see you. You can stop to breakfast with us and see Naomi.'

Cynthia thought it a work of charity to take him away from that death-chamber. Joshua could comfort and advise him.

The morning air blew in coolly when Oswald softly opened the great hall door. That clear cool light of dawn had a soothing influence; the solemn stillness of park and wood, the hollow murmur of yonder steel grey sea, flecked with whitest foam, awed and yet comforted the heart, or so it seemed to Cynthia as she walked beside her silent companion. The bell began to toll as they came from the park into the wooded lane that led down to the bay and the open space at the beginning of the high street. Each slow and dismal stroke made Cynthia shiver, as if each repetition were a surprise.

She made no attempt to console her companion during this lonely walk, which might be supposed a fitting opportunity for the expression of sympathy. If he needed human consolation, Joshua's wisdom could better measure and administer to his necessity, she thought; and, next to Joshua, Naomi would be the best, the most natural consoler.

But to Cynthia's surprise, when they came to the little green gate, Oswald refused to go in. The parlour shutters had been opened, and the household was evidently astir. She urged him to stay to breakfast, or at least to see Joshua.

- 'No,' he said, 'it is very kind of you to wish it; but I am too much upset. I would rather go back. I shall have many things to arrange. I may be wanted.'
- 'Joshua shall come to you, then,' replied Cynthia. 'Good-bye.'

She gave him her hand. He held it in both his own for a moment or two, looking at her with an expression full of sadness, half piteous, half pleading. He bent his head over the cold gloveless hand and kissed it. There were tears upon it when he let it

go, and, with a scarcely audible blessing, he left Cynthia Haggard standing at the gate, and walked quickly back towards the Grange.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

#### THE SORROWS OF WERTHER.

OSWALD PENTREATH, having set his father's papers in order, and reduced the dusty chaos of the old Squire's private study into form, found himself, comparatively speaking, a rich man. Those long years of retirement in which Squire Pentreath had held himself aloof from all social intercourse had not been spent in vain. They left their fruit behind them in the shape of stock, and shares, and bonds, which all meant money; for Mr. Pentreath had not speculated his savings in wild ventures, but had cloven to safe investments, and had been content with a reasonable percentage. Not even for the chance of doubling his capital would he have risked it. His was not the genius of the stockjobber, but rather the plodding temper of the village miser, who puts coin to coin, and finds an all-sufficient joy in the growth of his hoard.

The estate was in excellent order—every mortgage paid off—and the rental was close to three thousand a year. The Squire's investments were worth another thousand, and brought Oswald's income to an amount which, to a young man who had seldom enjoyed the unfettered use of a five-pound note, seemed inordinate wealth.

The Squire had made a will, dated the year of his son Arnold's flight, bequeathing twenty pounds a year to each of his old servants, and all the rest of his property, real and personal, to Oswald. There was no mention of the younger son. In the letter which informed Arnold of his father's death, Oswald affectionately urged his brother to give up a seafaring life and return to Combhollow. where he should have one of the farms and a thousand a year. 6 My father's will was evidently made in a fit of anger against you, wrote Oswald; 'you must not think that I could be so unjust as to take advantage of my father's injustice and keep all for myself. No, Arnold; I am sure you know me better than to suppose me capable of such iniquity. I shall be a rich man in any case. You must have had enough of the sea by this time. Come back, my dear brother, for the sake of the good old days when we were boys together. I want you more than I can say. I love you as dearly as I did when we were children, and I was the big brother. Do you remember that summer day when we lost ourselves in Matcherly Wood, and you were so tired I was obliged to carry you

home? When we had got about half way you wanted to carry me, though I was twice your size. I never pass that corner of the wood without remembering what you said, and your clinging arms round my neck, and your warm cheek next mine.'

The Squire being laid with his forefathers, and honoured with a handsome funeral—which was attended by many people who had detested him living, but reverenced him as a parochial institution dead—life at the Grange fell back into its old quiet round, save that the door was more frequently assailed by importunate tenants, who boldly asked favours of the new lord which they would not have dared to hint at to the old one. The old servants felt that the spirit of parsimony was gone from the household, and kept a better table; but they had been so long and severely trained in economy, that extravagance was an impossibility for them, and Oswald had nothing to apprehend upon that score. For his own part, the new master had a curious feeling of freedom as he paced the dull old rooms and rattled the money in his pockets absently, wondering how it had come there.

He looked very handsome and melancholy in his sable suit, and the young ladies who came to the parish church, where he worshipped alone in his big pew on Sunday mornings, thought it a hard thing that he should have engaged himself to a Methodist parson's daughter.

He attended Little Bethel of an evening, they were informed, which seemed an unmanly dallying with two creeds—to say nothing of chapel being so much less genteel than church, and a mode of salvation peculiarly adapted for the shopkeeping class, who did not mind perspiring together in a limited space, and inhaling one another's breath.

Naomi's wedding seemed a long way off in these days, when the Squire's funeral was still the newest topic in Combhollow, and when people had not yet left off disputing in a friendly way as to the number of the mourning coaches, or inveighing bitterly against those tenants who ought to have attended the funeral and had not done so. Shadowy and remote—the merest speck in a cloudy future—seemed that marriage-day which had once been so near, the fair to-morrow of life. Oswald was quite broken down by his father's death—more grieved than even Naomi, who best knew the softness of his nature, had expected him to be. It was not likely that he could talk of marriage at such a time, and Naomi was neither surprised nor offended at his silence about the wedding that was to have been, and the far-off wedding which was to be.

She put away her wedding dress on the day of the Squire's

funeral, while the sepulchral bell, which had rung out its solemn note for the passing of his soul, tolled again in the windy April weather, while, through changing lights and shadows, by fluttering young leaves, and under the blue sky where the lark was singing above the dark brown earth newly pierced by the green corn-spears—came the black funeral train—sable plumes, horses' manes, mourners' scarves tossing in the fresh April breeze—slowly winding down the hilly road into Combhollow.

The funeral bell was in Naomi's ears as she folded the pretty pearl-grey silk—the first silk dress she had ever possessed—shedding some quiet tears as she smoothed the folds, and laid the garment in a drawer, wrapped in fresh white linen, with a sprinkling of dried lavender, as beseemed so precious a fabric. There was the serviceable brown cloth pelisse, too, which she was to have worn on her journey to Cheltenham, where she and Oswald were to have spent their honeymoon. That also must be put away for the days to come. Naomi's wear for the next six months was to be sombre' black. She had put on mourning for her betrothed's father, as in duty bound. Cynthia also wore black, and Aunt Judith had produced a suit of ancient sable, rusty but whole, not sorry to have this opportunity of wearing out the surplus stock left from her mourning for her sister-in-law, when Joshua, in his character of grief-stricken widower, had been naturally liberal, and had allowed her to lay in large supplies of bombazine and crape.

Oswald said little about the postponed wedding, but he came to Mr. Haggard's as often as before his father's death; and even Judith, who was lying in wait for a deterioration in his character now that he had come into his fortune, could not yet put her finger on a flaw. He was changed, nevertheless; but the change was sweet and commendable in his nature, as it was in Hamlet, when that young prince gave way to moodiness and despondency after the loss of a parent. He was melancholy, and often absentminded, his cheek paler than of old, his eye heavier.

Never had Naomi loved him so tenderly as now, when, for the first time since their betrothal, he needed sympathy and consolation. To her who so deeply loved her father, this grief for a parent seemed in no wise strained or unnatural. True that the Squire had not been one's ideal of a father—not a gracious and dignified figure like that dead Hamlet who revisited the glimpses of the moon; but death has a sanctifying influence—nay, even a fantastical power, which lends new attributes to the image of the departed—and Oswald, whose youth had been made a time of restraint and deprivation by his father's meanness, was soft-hearted enough to regret his tyrant.

Never did a man seem less inclined to take advantage of a loosened rein and run into riot and extravagance. Day after day Oswald led the same calm, orderly life—riding or reading in the mornings, according to the weather; devoting his afternoons and evenings to his betrothed. He had thoughts of buying, or building, a yacht; but deferred even this indulgence in the hope of Arnold's return.

'We'll build our yacht here, in Combhollow,' he said, 'and Arnold shall superintend the work, and be skipper.'

Oswald looked forward to his brother's coming with an almost feverish impatience. It seemed as if there were some innate weakness in his character which made him incapable of enjoying the privilege of independence. Now that his father was gone, he wanted his brother for a guide and adviser. Or it might be only the affection of the elder brother for the younger, made a barren love by long years of separation, which now yearned for the unforgotten companion of boyhood. Whatever feeling it was that made him anxious, Oswald's anxiety was very evident; and Naomi sympathised with him in this longing, and loved to hear him talk of his brother.

'How fond I shall be of him!' she said, one evening, when they were sitting on the old stone bench in the wilderness, talking of Arnold. 'He is like you, Oswald; I have heard my father say so. He remembers you both as boys.'

'Yes, we were always considered very much alike. But Arnold is stouter and stronger built than I—a man of tougher fibre altogether. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to run away to sea. You might have prophesied it of him when he was two years old. Such a hardy, bold, uncompromising little vagabond, but brimming over with affection.'

'And fond of you, Oswald?'

'Fond of me! Bless his loving little heart! He used to run after me like an affectionate puppy when he first began to toddle; such a round, fat little thing in those baby days, always ready for fisticuffs in my defence, though I was twice his size. There was a time when he would not go to sleep of a night unless I sat on the edge of his bed and told him stories. Yes, I have good reason to love him; dear fellow, and the strongest claim he has upon my love is my latest memory of my mother, when I saw the sweet, pale face lying on the pillow, and Arnold's baby eyes looking up at it.'

The tears came to his eyes as he spoke of that sad memory, almost dreamlike in its remoteness. Naomi put her hand in his without a word. Only by that gentle touch did she remind him

that it was her mission to share all his griefs, even the old unforgotten sorrows of his earliest days.

It was a mild May evening—an evening on the edge of summer—with a perfect calmness in atmosphere and sky—an evening on which the soul broods on sad, sweet thoughts. The lovers had been sitting alone for an hour or more, talking by fits and starts,—with lengthening intervals of silence.

'My father has been dead five weeks, hasn't he, Naomi?' Oswald asked, after a long pause, during which Naomi's needle had been methodically travelling along a fine linen wristband, leaving a line of pearly stitches behind it. The manufacture of a shirt for her father was a work of high art with Naomi.

'Yes, dear; five weeks yesterday.'

'Then in seven weeks more we must be married, Naomi,' said Oswald, as seriously as he had spoken of his mother's death.

This was his first word about the postponed marriage, and it startled Naomi as if it had been the most unlikely subject for a lover's discourse.

'So soon, dear?'

'Three months, Naomi. Surely that is long enough to wait out of respect to the dead. It is not as if we meant to have a grand wedding. We will just walk quietly into the old parish church some morning, with your father and his wife, and Aunt Judith and Jim, and there shall be a postchaise at the lych gate, ready to drive us to Cheltenham. Let me see, this is the twenty-fourth of May. We might be married early in July. Why should we wait any longer?'

'Dear Oswald, you must know I have hardly a wish that is not yours,' Naomi began, earnestly.

'I know you are all goodness.'

' But\_\_\_\_',

'But what, love?'

'I have fancied—it may be nothing more than fancy perhaps, but you must not be angry with me for speaking of it—I have fancied lately that there was some change in your feeling for me; it is not that you have been less kind or affectionate, yet I have felt the change. You remember how my father wished that we should be very sure of each other's sincerity. That is why he wanted us to wait two years before we were even engaged. The two years are not gone yet; and if—if the change has come—the change he thought likely, He who knows the human heart and its weakness—let us loosen the bond, dear Oswald. There shall be no word of complaint from me—I should neither blame you nor think ill of you, dear love—I should honour you for being frank and truthful

with me—and keep the memory of our happy days as the most sacred part of my life—and be your affectionate friend to my death.'

'Best, noblest, dearest, you are only too good for me!' cried Oswald, clasping his betrothed to his breast, moved to a rapture of reverence and regard by her generous kindness. 'No, I have never changed to you—no, I could never change in my esteem, my admiration for all that is highest in woman. Do you remember those verses of Waller's, dear:

Amoret! as sweet and good As the most delicious food, Which, but tasted, does impart Life and gladness to the heart.

You are my Amoret, dearest. What do I want with Sacharissa's beauty, "which to madness doth incline"?

'But you ought to go to London now that you are free and rich; you ought to see the world, Oswald, and in London you may meet your Sacharissa,' suggested Naomi, radiant with happiness.

She had said what had long been in her mind to say. She had made her offer of self-sacrifice, in all good faith, and it had been rejected. She had no further fear or hesitation.

- 'I don't care about London, love. It is nothing but a den of thieves, according to my poor father's description. When I see it we will see it together, and go to the Tower, and St. Paul's, and the waxworks, and Westminster Abbey, like regular country cousins. Come, Naomi, let us be serious and talk about the future. There is the old house to be brightened and smartened a little before I take my wife home to it. I should have had much ado to screw a new carpet and a coat of whitewash out of my father; but I am a master now, and I can pull down the Grange and build an Italian villa after Palladio, if you like.'
- 'Dear Oswald, you must know that I would not have you disturb a stone of the old house.'
- 'In good faith, dear, I shouldn't care to do it. It is the house my mother lived and died in, the first house my eyes saw, the house where my brother was born, the only house that has ever been home to me, though, Heaven knows, it has been but a cheerless home at times. No, we won't alter, Naomi, we will only beautify. I have been too idle all this time. I'll send to Exeter for an architect and put the business in hand at once.'

The architect arrived on the scene about a week later, and made a somewhat supercilious inspection of the good old house, which had seemed to its occupiers solid enough to last for another three hundred years; but which, according to the architect, was in

a very perilous condition. He tapped the oak panels contemptuously, pronounced the flooring of the upper stories too worm-eaten for anything save entire reinstatement, feared that the whole fabric required under-pinning, and took an altogether despondent view of the matter.

'You want the thing done thoroughly, I suppose, Mr. Pen-

treath,' he said.

'I should like the drawing-room painted, and the sitting-room upstairs; and if you could build a greenhouse anywhere——'

'Of course, of course—you must have a conservatory opening out of the drawing-room. If we were to glaze that western end, now, and throw out a rotunda at the end for tropical plants, palms and so on, you know. I did the same thing for Sir Brydges Baldry's place on the other side of Exeter, and it had a charming effect. I'll make you a sketch if you like!'

'You are very good,' said Oswald, dubiously; 'but I don't

think my father would have liked-

He had conscientious scruples about spending so much money—squandering hundreds of pounds upon fanciful improvements—not that he set undue value upon the money himself, but from the thought of what an agony of indignation such an outlay would have caused his father. Rotundas, forsooth! Could that lean old miser lie quiet in his grave while his beloved guineas were

being wasted on such trumpery?

'Really, now, Mr. Pentreath,' said the architect, with the easy assurance of a professional man employed by the best families, 'I should imagine the question was not so much what your father would have liked, were he living to enjoy his opinion, but what will please your wife when you bring her home here. Rather a dismal house for a young lady, I should think. A circular conservatory, now, at the end of this drawing-room, would have an enlivening effect. As it is, there is a meanness about the room; long and narrow, no variety, no relief. But you must please yourself. Shall we go to the boudoir?'

The room which the architect insisted on calling a boudoir, was the pretty parlour on the first floor which Mrs. Pentreath had used. Here the professional adviser suggested so many improvements— a marble mantelpiece and a more civilised stove, French windows and a balcony, an alcove built out at the end for a statue, with a painted glass window behind it—that Oswald felt as if the Grange were going to be improved off the face of the earth unless

he made a bold stand against the improver.

'This was my mother's room,' he said. 'I wouldn't alter it for the world.'

The architect shrugged his shoulders and felt inclined to ask, 'Then what do you want me for, sir, if you have made up your mind to keep your money in your pockets?' But there were certain things about which the architect was arbitrary—flooring which must be taken up, warped and shrunken oaken panels which must be replaced by new ones, passages and servants' offices which must be altered and improved to adapt them to the requirements of a more civilised form of life.

'Think of the change which has taken place in our habits,' exclaimed the architect, conclusively.

Oswald submitted, and a voluminous specification was the result of this interview. This in due course was submitted to a builder of Barnstaple and a builder of Exeter; whereupon the Exeter builder, as the man of more advanced views and larger capital, or credit, won the day; and about a fortnight afterwards sent a small army of white-jacketed men to Pentreath Grange, who took the place in hand, and made haste to render it utterly odious and uninhabitable. Oswald contrived to sleep in the old house, shifting his quarters as the men followed him from room to room, now taking out his windows, anon cutting a rotten patch out of his ceiling, and descending upon him, like Jove, in a shower of plaster.

Having no home of his own at this period of disruption, he spent his days in the house of his betrothed, sharing the minister's homely fare, hearing all Aunt Judith's complaints against the general incapacity of her subordinates, and spending long and quiet hours talking or reading aloud in the neat parlour where Naomi and her stepmother sat at work.

'What women you are for plain needlework!' he exclaimed one warm afternoon in a sudden burst of impatience, wearied by the rhythmical movement of the two needles methodically stitching on, no matter how passionate the subject of his reading—whether Rebecca was standing on the verge of the castle parapet, or Constance de Beverly left to perish in her living grave. 'I never saw anything like your perpetual industry. One would suppose it were a kind of feminine treadmill, by which you do penance for your sins.'

'We have nothing else to do,' said Cynthia, with a faint sigh.
'Naomi is teaching me to make her father's shirts; if I could not do that, I could do nothing for him. But I'm afraid my stitching will never be so good as Naomi's.'

Oswald looked out of the window listlessly across the row of stocks and carnations in red flower-pots. It was a midsummer afternoon, warm to oppressiveness. There was a perfume of newly-

cut hay from the meadows behind the First and Last, a faint breath from distant beanfields in flower, the warm air heavy as with the incense Earth offers to her goddess Summer. The bricklayers were hard at work up at the Grange, and there was a run upon that thin and sour cider which had been the old Squire's household beverage, and which nothing less than very warm weather and honest toil could render acceptable to the human palate.

Oswald had an air of being tired of life this afternoon, as he threw himself back in his chair, and sighed, and stifled a yawn, and looked far away across the haycocks yonder. Naomi glanced up at him now and then from her work, with grave, observant eyes. It seemed to her that there was a jarring chord somewhere. He was not happy. And how was it, and why was it? Not grief for his father's death, surely; that cloud had passed. Impatience for his brother Arnold's return, perhaps. That seemed more likely.

There was no idea now of the marriage being early, or late, in July. The improvements and reparations at the Grange would not be finished till October at the earliest, and Oswald must have his house ready before he could take to himself a wife. Naomi felt that the wedding was still far off.

'I shall bring you a new book to-morrow afternoon,' said Oswald, rousing himself from his reverie.

'By the author of "Waverley"?'

'No, you cannot have a new novel by the author of "Waverley" every day, though he writes two, and sometimes three, a year. This is quite a different kind of book—a study of the human heart—a man's great sorrow described by himself. He was coward enough to let the sorrow make an end of him, instead of making an end of his sorrow—strangling it as Hercules strangled the snakes in his cradle—as a brave man would have done, no doubt, with a short laugh, half scorn, half bitterness.

'Is it a book that a Christian may read?' asked Naomi. 'But I am sure you would not bring us any book in which there were evil thoughts.'

'There are no evil thoughts in this—only an irresistible fate governing a weak soul. There is no sin in the book—only foolishness and an overmastering sorrow.'

'What is it called?'

'The "Sorrows of Werther," a translation from the German of Goethe, a book that set Germany in a blaze many years ago, but which I never saw till the other day. I bought the volume at a bookstall in Exeter, when I went over to settle with the builders.'

The reading of 'Werther' began on the following afternoon, in

the wilderness. Naomi and her lover were alone, Cynthia having gone to sit with an old woman of the flock, whose frame was a kind of museum for the exhibition of interesting varieties in the rheumatic line.

Oswald looked disappointed at losing one of his auditors.

'I thought Mrs. Haggard would have liked "Werther," he said.

'She always reads to old Mrs. Pincote on Wednesday afternoons. She said you were to begin the book all the same—she would enjoy hearing any part of it. But if you would rather not begin to-day——'

'My unselfish Naomi! No, dear, I shall read to you. It is of

your pleasure I think at all times, you know, Naomi.'

'You are too good to me.'

Oswald began rather lazily, and dawdled so much over the pages—stopping to talk now and then, and stopping to yawn very often—that he got no farther than the threshold of the story when five o'clock struck from the old grey tower, and it was time to go back to the house for tea.

'I'm afraid you don't find it very interesting so far,' said Oswald.

'It is not like "Ivanhoe," or the "Antiquary," replied Naomi; but it is very pretty. The young man seems kind and amiable—fond of children—warmly attached to his friend—fond of picturesque scenery.'

'Yes, he is all that.' It is a picture painted in delicate half tints at the beginning—the strong colouring comes afterwards.'

They went into the woods next day for their afternoon ramble, Cynthia accompanying them, and Oswald carrying 'Werther' in his pocket. They peeped in at the Grange on their way. It looked a chaos of raw plaster and new deal, and did not invite a long inspection. Oswald had consented to the rotunda for tropical plants, and one end of the long drawing-room was open to the daylight.

'You are going to be mistress of quite a handsome mansion, Naomi, and will have to play the great lady,' said Oswald, laughing at the look of consternation with which his betrothed contem-

plated the improvements.

'That I shall never be able to do, Oswald.'

'There I can't agree with you. Nature intended you for a person of importance. There are only a few details to be learnt—how to issue invitations, the precedence of your guests, to drive a pair of ponies, to play the Lady Bountiful with discretion, and so on. I have more to learn as country squire than you as the squire's wife.'

'I wish Providence had not made you so rich, Oswald. It

seems ungrateful to repine at blessings, but if you had been my equal in birth and fortune I should have been the happiest of women.'

'It will be very ungrateful of you if you are not the happiest of women with that rotunda,' said Oswald, gaily; and then they went across the park—it was to be really a park in future, and Oswald was eager to introduce a herd of deer—and from the park into the tangle of greenery, amid the ever-shifting lights and shadows of the wood.

Here they found a ferny bank, more luxurious than any sofa, on which the two girls sat down to work, while Oswald lay on the grass at their feet, and resumed the story of Werther. He read long, and read well, losing his own identity in that of the melancholy hero. He came to the pretty house on the skirts of the forest, and the picture of Charlotte cutting hunches of black bread for the eager little brothers and sisters before setting out for the ball. That innocent image of youth and beauty was something new to the listeners. Not even in the pages of Scott had they met with so pure and perfect a picture of womanhood.

Then came the rustic dance, and the thrill of rapture that moved Werther's breast when his hand touched the maiden's for the first time, and floated in the waltz with her, and felt a lightness he had never known before, as if he no more belonged to grovelling humanity; the consciousness of sorrow and loss when he heard that she was pledged to another—the thunderstorm—the simple, childish games by which Charlotte beguiled the terrors of her companions—the whole description as artless as Goldsmith's pictures of the Primrose family, but with a ground-swell of passion below the placid surface which Goldsmith knew not.

'And since that time sun, moon, and stars may go their ways; I know not day from night: the world around me has vanished.'

Cynthia's work dropped on her lap. She sat with her large blue eyes fixed on the reader, her lips slightly parted; all her soul in that listening look. For the first time she heard the story of a love that was fatal—not like Rebecca's unrequited passion, elevating and strengthening the soul by the ordeal of a silent sorrow—but an over-mastering love taking possession of a weak nature, and holding it as the seven devils held their fated prey.

And this was what love meant sometimes in the world; not a reverential affection, not gratitude, esteem, respect, such as she had given to Joshua, and which had made marriage with him seem the highest honour that Providence could bestow—but blind, unreasoning passion—a fire kindled in a moment, and consuming the soul. She knew that Werther would never be happy again. She

longed intensely to follow that devious path of his; to know if he struggled and conquered, or yielded and fell. She found herself wishing some evil fate—at least a convenient fever or merciful consumption—for Charlotte's excellent betrothed.

'No. I do not deceive myself! read in her eyes a deep interest in me and my fate. Yes, I feel, and in this I will trust my own heart, that she—oh! dare I, can I, breathe the Heaven in those words? I feel that she loves me!'

At these words Oswald closed the book suddenly, with a sigh.

- 'Will you read to us again after tea?' she asked, eagerly, when the inexorable church clock warned them that they had but just time to be punctual in their attendance at the tea-table.
  - 'I thought you would like the book,' said Oswald.

'It is beautiful,' she sighed.

He looked up at her, and their eyes met. Dangerous for such eyes so to meet, such thoughts in the minds of each, such disquiet in either heart. Cynthia's delicate colour had faded to ivory pale before that lingering look had ended. Fatal book, which told them what was amiss in their lives!

They walked home for the most part in silence, though Oswald tried to be merry about the rotunda, and the tremendous things that the Exeter architect was doing with the Grange, half against its owner's will. His gaiety had a forced sound, and Naomi looked at him wonderingly. Why was it that since his father's death he had been so unlike his old self—so fitful and variable?

After tea they went to the wilderness, and sat there while the soft summer light faded gently into grey evening, and the bats 'skimmed to and fro above their heads, and distant nightingales called to each other in the woods. Oswald read into the heart of the book—read until Werther's passion had grown from dawn to mid-day—from a rose-coloured dream of innocence and beauty, pure as morning, to the lurid gloom of a thunder-charged sky.

The earliest stars were up, silver pale, when he shut the book without a word. Joshua Haggard came through the little orchard and looked at the group with a grave smile.

- 'Reading all this time, Oswald!' he exclaimed, 'and some foolish fiction, I'll be bound. How much of your life you waste upon fancies!'
- 'Fancy is sometimes sweeter than reality,' answered Oswald, and real life has given me very little to do.'
  - 'A pity,' said the minister.
- 'We cannot all have our mission. One man is born a preacher, like you; another a soldier, like Wellington; or a lawyer and defender of the oppressed, like Brougham. I was born nothing; born

to enjoy the hunting in winter, and the sunshine in summer; to lie in Pentreath woods and read Byron; to do no harm, I hope, and any good that I can.'

The minister sighed.

'The blessings Providence gives us are charges,' he said. 'We shall have to account for them.'

They went back to the house together, and Oswald took his place at the usual assembling of the household for evening prayer. To-night the preacher chose the parable of the Talents for his reading and exposition. Oswald felt that the moral drawn therefrom was intended for his admonition. His house, his gardens, park, farms, woods, shares, and stocks, were the ten talents for which he was at present in no wise able to give a satisfactory account. far he had done nothing to improve the condition of the labourer upon his land; to let in the light of Gospel truth, or the free air of heaven to those stone cabins in which the hind and his family pigged in the company of their pigs. He had thought of improving his own house, but not of draining those stifling dens. He had been too easy a landlord, ready to grant any favour his tenants asked; but had taken no trouble to discover the state of the toilbowed tiller of the soil and his half-starved wife and children, the husbandman who was compelled to receive two shillings of the nine that made his weekly wage, in the shape of sour cider.

The time had been when Oswald Pentreath's mind was full of plans for doing good to his fellow men, and when he had looked upon the day of his independence as the dawning of a new era for the labourers on his land, but since his father's death he had been the victim of a distraction which had put all philanthropic intentions out of his mind.

'When Arnold comes back I shall be able to set things going in a good way. Arnold has more energy than I have,' he thought, expecting every good thing as a consequence of his brother's return.

(To be continued.)

### A Little Shoe.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'COMIN' THRO' THE RYE.'

THERE it lies, a little shoe— Only that, at least to you. Just such others, six or more, Patter on your nursery floor; And your heart and lips are smiling, Some sweet thought is you beguiling, Of one little pair of feet That will hurry out to meet Mother . . . and when they have found you, Chubby arms will cling around you. You will have no need to call him, Neither sleep nor death enthral him. You will hold him to your breast, With an utter sense of rest; All your own, within your grasp, At your neck the baby clasp.

And to me a tearless weeping,
And a hunger never sleeping,
As I stand, my heart out-leaping,
Knocking, knocking at the door,
Where God stands for evermore.
For He holds the wee one who
Once did wear this little shoe.
And the tender little voice,
That did make my heart rejoice,
Maybe He has taught another
Language, and the childish clinging
Has died out in his upbringing,
And he will not know his mother.

Not the shoe, but what was in it,
As the cage that holds the linnet,
Did I love; but Christ bereft me,
And the husk alone is left me:
On my dead heart let it lie;
I could leave it, if on high
My lost little one should meet me,
Tottering, hurrying up to greet me...
This you know not—only you
See a little common shoe.

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